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My sado-masochist mother tried to kill me, says Mary Bell

BY RICHARD FORD
THE child killer Mary Bell discloses today that her mother tried to kill her and that she suffered horrific abuse at home. She also recalls her mother frequently telling her that nobody could be as bad as Mary, that she had brought shame upon the family, and that nobody felt compassion for her after she was convicted of killing two younger children when she was 11 years old.

"My mother had always said nobody did, nobody could [feel compassion] because I was so bad... such a shaming thing in her life." Bell says in *Cries Unheard*, the book by Gina Sereny which begins serialisation in *The Times* today. "When I was released she said I was never to tell anybody that she was my mother, that she couldn't live with the shame of it, and she introduced me to her pub pals as her sister and at other times as her cousin."

Bell does not claim that she was unjustly convicted, and she told Sereny that she had decided to cooperate with her to find out "how could it have happened; how did I become such a child?" Bell goes on to claim in the book that her mother, a prostitute specialising in sado-masochism, tried to kill her as a small child and that she was sexually abused by

men who visited their home. She also says that she was the victim of a number of childhood "accidents" involving pills. Although Bell recounts treatment at the hands of her mother, she admits that it did not excuse her for strangling Martin Brown, 4, and Brian Howe, 3, in 1968. But both Bell, now 41 and the mother of a 14-year-old daughter,

and Ms Sereny believe that the book and details of her background in the tough Scotswood Road area of Newcastle could help towards an understanding of what drove a child to kill.

Ms Sereny writes that two weeks after they started their interviews in 1996, Bell began to disclose horrific incidents of abuse by her mother, Betty. "Sometimes she would blindfold me, she called it 'playing blind man's bluff'. And she would tie a stocking around my eyes and lift me up and twirl me around, laughing," Bell says. Bell says that after being abused she was given sweets and chips by her mother, who she then felt loved her. "I remember her then as very pretty and she didn't call me names, and even taught me to knit. But then she ripped all the stitches off and threw the stuff at me."

Ms Sereny says that she was so sceptical about the details that Bell remembered and so concerned about their horrific nature that she made her repeat them three times. Betty Bell died three years ago and this, according to Ms Sereny, "freed" Bell, who says that she decided to talk because she wanted to "set the record straight" about her background and events leading to the killings. Bell and her friend Norma Bell were accused of murder. Norma, who was not related, Continued on page 2, col 5

The truth about Mary Bell, pages 16, 17. Peter Stothard, page 18

Lawyers on attack over 'fat cats' list

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

LAWYERS hit back at the Government yesterday after the Lord Chancellor published a "name and shame" list of forty barristers and law firms who received most from the legal aid fund last year. The list showed that ten barristers were paid more than £400,000, one law firm received more than £8.5 million, and a further six were paid more than £2 million. But the move appeared to backfire as the Bar countered with data showing that some of the payments covered more than one year's work, that the legal aid fund was often reimbursed after costs were recovered from defendants in personal injury cases, and that no account had been taken of the amount of work done. The Law Society said that far from being ashamed, lawyers should be proud to be on the list since it proved they were doing a great deal of legal aid work for many people.

The Bar immediately denounced the figures as a crude attempt to pillory barristers. Nigel Pascoe, QC, chair of the Bar Council public affairs committee, said: "The public are rightly entitled to know what legal aid money is spent on, but this is very misleading." The payments listed for 1996-97 covered work for more than one year: in the case of Richard Maxwell, who was listed as earning between £270,000 and £319,000, the payments spanned nine years. Second, the figures covered some extremely complex cases and lawyers with heavy workloads. For example, Charles Lewis, who was paid between £190,000 and £229,000, handled 517 cases. Finally, they included cases where the costs were eventually met by the other side: out of £319,000 paid to David Allan, QC, to bring civil actions, all but £28,420 will be recovered from defendants. Dave McNeil of the Law Society said: "It certainly does not show that they are legal aid fat cats. It reflects the work they are doing and shows they are helping a lot of people."

The Government plans to lay regulations by July to scrap legal aid for personal injury claims. But fresh research from the Law Society yesterday showed that the plans - aimed at widening access to justice for "middle income Britain" - would leave some of the poorest unable to pursue claims. The Lord Chancellor's Department has said that law firms should earn a good living from "no win, no fee" work, which is to replace civil legal aid. But independent research for the Law Society by Sheffield University showed that people with complex or long-running claims would find it hard to obtain a lawyer on such a basis since firms would not be able to bear the financial risks of running their cases. Under the proposals "the poorest and those who have been most seriously injured will suffer most," the report says.

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Michelle Smith celebrates after winning the first of three Olympic gold medals in Atlanta two years ago

Michelle Smith in deep water after drug test

BY CRAIG LORD

MICHELLE SMITH, the controversial swimmer who became Ireland's greatest sporting heroine when she won three Olympic titles in Atlanta in 1996, faces possible suspension after a drug test. The Irish Swimming Association has been informed by Fina, the sports international ruling body, of the drug test. The sample is believed to have been produced when out-of-competition testers called on Smith unannounced early this year and to have been analysed at a European laboratory, Smith, 28, from Rathcoole, near Dublin, may now request that the "B" sample taken for the drug test be analysed to confirm or annul the result of the "A" sample. It is believed that the drug test did not involve a specific banned substance, but a test may be deemed a failure if there is evidence that a sample has been tampered with. The nature of the drug test will determine the suspension that Smith faces. Fina rules allow for a suspension of up to four years for the most serious abuses. They also state that all competition results in the six months before a positive test is returned must be annulled, so that Smith could be stripped of the two gold and two silver

medals that she won at the European Championships in Seville last summer. The swimmer did not answer or return calls from *The Times* last night. Peter Lennon, Smith's solicitor, said last night: "She had not failed a drugs test within the meaning of the rules." Asked what he meant, Mr Lennon replied: "Have you ever known an athlete to have been suspended for taking a drug that is not licenced or particularised? Have you ever known an athlete to have been suspended for interfering with a sample as is alleged here?" Smith's achievements two years ago were tarnished by unsubstantiated rumours of drug use, but she received a heroine's welcome from President Robinson after becoming Ireland's first Olympic swimming champion with three gold medals and a bronze. Her extraordinary improvement in form, which came late in her career and catapulted her from relative anonymity, coincided with her relationship with Erik de Bruin, the coach who became her husband. They met at the Olympic Games in 1992 when Smith was ranked outside the best 50 swimmers in the world. Tarnished gold, page 44

Experiments on patients alleged

American and Norwegian hospitals were involved in sterilisation experiments on mentally retarded people using radiation in an echo of the Nazi era. Most of the work was done during the Cold War but some continued until 1994, according to the Oslo daily *Dagbladet*. Page 15

Increased fears of recession

Fears that the manufacturing sector is on the verge of recession increased after new data showed business optimism has fallen to its lowest point since the height of the last recession. Meanwhile, the trade deficit has grown to its widest level for eight years. Page 23

£7m Wimbledon

The Wimbledon prize-money this year will exceed £7.2 million, with the men's singles champion collecting £435,000 and the women's £391,500. First-round losers will get over £6,500. Page 42

Lorry drivers threaten to blockade the World Cup

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE leader of the most militant French lorry drivers' union has threatened to cause traffic mayhem during the football World Cup in France this summer unless haulage bosses agree to demands for higher pay and shorter hours. Roger Poletti, leader of the Force Ouvrière, spearheaded the strikes that paralysed the French road system in 1996 and 1997 with lorry barricades across the country. But many French drivers claim that the concessions won then have never been honoured. "I am not the 'Red Devil' depicted in certain newspapers," M Poletti said. "I do not want to cause trouble for the many supporters coming to the World Cup. I just want the employers to shoulder their responsibilities." The union demands include an increase in the average hourly wage from Fr43 (£4.30) to a minimum of Fr55. A meeting is planned for May 16

to decide on union action. "We have already studied the possibility of blockades at five or six points across France," M Poletti added. A lorry-drivers' strike could well ignite industrial action among railway, Métro and bus workers, raising the prospect of transport chaos for millions of football fans. The new national stadium, the Stade de France at Saint Denis, has already been criticised for poor access to public transport, and a strike by transport workers and lorry drivers could effectively cut the ground off. René-Georges Querry, the head of the £12 million French security operation for the World Cup, admitted yesterday that three lorries placed at crossroads could block the circulation of the traffic outside the Stade de France. Union leaders are acutely aware that the French Government will not tolerate a disruption of the World Cup, but the spectacle of riot police dismantling barricades and removing strikers by force could be equally damaging for the image France is determined to project.

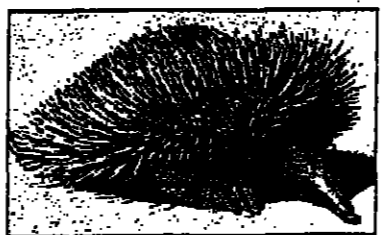


"I've made up my mind who to support in the World Cup"

Is Antipodean ant-eater the antidote to termites?

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

ANT-EATERS should be imported from Down Under to combat the menace of termites which have infested a house in Devon, an Australian-born peer suggested yesterday. Baroness Gardner of Parkes told the Lords that termites known as "white ants" were common in Australia but were controlled by their native predator, the echidna - or ant-eater. A colony of termites was discovered four years ago in a £250,000 holiday



The echidna: SOS call?

have re-established itself. The inch-long termites, believed to come from southern Europe, are voracious and

Lady Gardner, who was born in Sydney, pointed out yesterday that although Australia suffered from termites, there were many buildings still standing. She told Baroness Hayman, the Environment Minister: "The echidna is a natural predator who thrives on these termites. Would you consider, if the worst comes to the worst, introducing a few echidnae from Australia to deal with the problem?" Lady Hayman thanked Lady Gardner for her international lateral thinking, and said: "There is a serious problem here, if we found that termites

understand what you say about some buildings remaining in Australia, but there is great damage caused there and in southern Europe by these pests. If there's any danger from that, we ought to take appropriate action." The Environment Department, the Building Research Establishment and the Forestry Commission were all working on the problem. In the meantime, the Liberal Democrat Lord Mackie of Benshie was wary of Lady Gardner's idea, saying: "Australians should not talk about the introduction of strange species into any

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Aristotelian banalities from the tubby Guru of St Pancras

Given the London constituency nursed by Frank Dobson (Holborn & St Pancras) it is certain that he represents many Greeks. Were Aristotle alive and living in England Mr Dobson would probably be his Member of Parliament.

With his hospitable manner, grey beard and penchant for mellow philosophising, the Health Secretary may be unconsciously tuned to the wavelength of his constituents' most distinguished ancestor.

As to the wisdom of the Ancients, I sometimes wonder

what all the excitement was about. "We praise the man," said Aristotle, "who is angry on the right grounds, against the right persons, in the right manner, at the right moment, and for the right length of time" — a remark of quite stunning banality.

As to the wisdom of Mr Dobson... well, perhaps he has been reading the *Nicomachean Ethics*? At Health Questions yesterday, the cockney sage suddenly launched into sub-Aristotelian discourse so circular and trite that the Master must have

been applauding from some ghostly olive grove in the heavens. "The thing we've got to aim for in drug prescription," said the tubby luminary of the Euston Road, "is that the right patient gets the right drug in the right quantity at the right time."

Paul Flynn (Lab, Newport W), who is usually right, and who was concerned that the elderly in nursing homes are being drugged into zombieland with neuroleptic drugs doled out like fruit gums on the National Health Service, rocked back on his heels,

gobsmacked by the minister's insight. It was all so simple, now Frank put it this way!

But Dobson had more. "And that patients are not over-prescribed, nor under-prescribed..." the philosopher paused, "nor fail to get any prescription at all."

That seemed to cover it. The St Pancras guru settled back into his seat, modestly pleased with his epos. And got away with it. There is something irresistible about the directness of the Health Secretary. From his lips even a great clanking steam-loco of a platitude like that somehow reassures. And the more so because, when this minister does have something to say, he says it — and no messing. Moments later, responding to

the Liberal Democrats' Bob Russell (Colchester), one of those characters who looks as though he wears Disney ties at Christmas, Dobson delivered himself of the (on reflection astonishing) view that "there isn't a substantial body of opinion in the Labour Party that wants a substantial change to the NHS."

His judgments hit the House with a sort of thud. Julian Lewis (C, New Forest) raised a problem: rape in new mixed-sex wards in NHS hospitals. This sketch is relieved to tell you that Mr Lewis was

against it. You cannot always be sure with these wild new Tories.

"Well it's news to me about new mixed wards being opened," came Dobson's flat retort, "and if it's true I'll put a stop to it."

We are not used to ministers speaking like this. "The people of this country are sick to death of NHS waiting lists," he advised MPs. Hm.

His Minister of State, Alan Milburn, is as smooth as Dobson is hairy, and rather pleased with himself.

A posh Geordie of the Jack

Cunningham school of diction and comportment ("the whole purpose of conswearing pairshents...") he all but purred as Melanie Johnson (Lab, Welwyn Hatfield) lobbed a humdinger of an inquiry his way. "Would my hon friend like to confirm the very excellent speech made by our Rt hon friend [which was] a very well-received and excellent speech?"

Ouch! That would have stumped Aristotle. But not Milburn.

"My hon friend is *absolute*ly right," he drawled.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Brown defends timetable for monetary union

GORDON BROWN yesterday brushed aside a warning from MPs that it would be impossible to judge the success of monetary union for at least five years after its start in 1999.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer underlined his determination to stick to his timetable amid disarray on the Labour-dominated Treasury and Civil Service Committee. In spite of its clear pro-European majority, the committee gave Eurosceptics a substantial boost by suggesting that Mr Brown will not be in a position to make a judgment on the tests he has set for membership until well into the next Parliament.

However, the Chancellor, speaking in London, reiterated that the Government had committed itself in principle to monetary union and to begin preparations that would allow it to make a decision, subject to a referendum, early in the next Parliament. "Our strategy is to prepare and then decide," he said.

The report said that it would not be possible "to judge clearly and unambiguously either the success of EMU or the answer to all of the Chancellor's five tests for at least five years."

Pro-Europeans, including the committee chairman Giles Radice, accused sceptics of deliberately misinterpreting that sentence to mean that the committee was recommending that Britain should not enter for five years, whereas what it was actually saying was that it was not possible to make an unambiguous risk-free decision within that time.

They pointed out that in the very next sentence in the report they had made plain that the decision would have to be made on a political as

The Chancellor is defying calls for a rethink from a Labour-led committee, writes Philip Webster

well as economic assessment of the balance of national advantage.

Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor, eagerly seized on the report. It was, he said, a massive rebuff to the Government's hope of bouncing Britain into EMU soon after the next general election, were Labour to win. "This cross-party report shows that it would be impossible to know that the present obstacles to joining EMU had disappeared for at least five years. The Conservative party believes that we should keep the pound and intends to oppose joining the euro at the next election, subject to the agreement of party members nearer the time."

The report comes as European Union leaders prepare for next weekend's summit, at which they will confirm the first-wave membership of the single currency.

They are trying to avoid it being overshadowed by the bitter row over the presidency of the European Central Bank. Mr Blair, as president of the EU, is trying to broker a compromise that will see Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch chief of the European Monetary Institute, heading the bank for four years and then handing over to the French choice, Jean-Claude Trichet, Governor of

the Bank of France. Yesterday he spoke to Helmut Kohl and he is expected to have further conversations this week with Jacques Chirac and, on Friday, with Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister.

Yesterday, William Hague said that Mr Blair should step in to stop a fudged single currency being launched. "My guess is that he will duck the decision and leave the people and businesses of Europe to pick up the pieces. The Tory party's view is that we should see whether the single currency works in good times and bad before we consider joining."

The committee's conclusion on the timescale for judging success overshadowed its other conclusions, which were strongly pro-European in tone. It called for the preparation of a national changeover plan to give greater certainty for the measures that would be needed in the event of Britain deciding to join. It said that if the Government decided in favour of joining it should produce a final report containing a "comparative assessment of the consequences of entry and of staying out in the long term."

This should take into account the exchange rate, given the current high value of sterling, but also unemployment and welfare systems. It also expressed concern at a "lack of precision" in Mr Brown's economic tests, which Sir Michael Spicer, a Tory committee member and Eurosceptic, described as a "sham". Another Conservative Euro-sceptic, Sir Teddy Taylor added: "The tests are a load of codswallop and just a means of buying some time until the circumstances are right to make this catastrophic judgment."



Fay Selvan receiving her award yesterday

Prince gives hope to deprived areas

By ALEXANDRA FREAN

THE Prince of Wales yesterday promised to support the regeneration of 47 deprived areas through his charity Business in the Community.

He said that the charity had identified 40 areas in England, two in Wales and five in Northern Ireland where it hoped to encourage regeneration partnerships between the public and private sectors. As a first step, he said, business leaders would be taken on "Seeing Is Believing" tours around some of the sites.

The Prince was speaking in London at the 11th annual Community Enterprise Awards run by the charity and sponsored by The Times and NatWest. The Charles Douglas-Home Award for a large project went to Mark Gale of the Matson Neighbourhood Project in Gloucester. Fay Selvan won the runner-up prize for her running of two community health centres in Hume, Manchester. The award for a small scheme went to Susan Darbyshire of the Threefield Childcare Project in Wigan.

Labour rejects call on paper prices

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Trade Minister, Ian McCartney, has made it clear that the Government has no intention of legislating against newspapers which set a low cover price. In a letter in *The Times* today he rejects a Liberal Democrat amendment to the Competition Bill, carried in the Lords.

The Government has previously said the amendment, tabled by Liberal Democrat peer Lord McNally was "unworkable and unnecessary." But there had been speculation that Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, would come up with a new compromise amendment in the face of a growing rebellion of Labour MPs.

The amendment, which has been drawn up in league with *The Independent* newspaper is mainly directed at *The Times*' pricing policy and several Labour MPs have voiced concern about the Tony Blair's apparently close relationship with Rupert Murdoch, chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, ultimate owner of *The Times*.

In his letter today Mr McCartney, who was challenged by Lord McNally to explain why his amendment was unworkable says the effect of the amendment would be to inhibit genuine competition.

"It is no secret that the amendment is hopelessly unclear on such matters as how the market dominance would be assessed under the new prohibition, which companies would be covered, and what sorts of business or editorial practices would be banned," writes Mr McCartney.

He argues that the Competition Bill already contains new powers from which newspapers would not be exempt.

Letters, page 19

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hostels close doors to sex offenders

At least 10 per cent of the 101 probation hostels in England and Wales have barred sex offenders from their premises and others are refusing to take offenders from outside their area. Graham Smith, Chief Inspector of Probation, said it had become increasingly difficult to find accommodation for sex offenders since the release from jail of the paedophiles Robert Oliver and Sidney Cooke. "It is eventually going to be very hard, if not impossible, to find somewhere to place them," he said.

Hostels were refusing to take sex offenders "not because they cannot handle them or cope with them, but because they fear the consequences from the local community doing something very stupid to the hostel and the staff," he said.

Mr Smith was speaking at the Home Office at the publication of a report that disclosed that in 1996 the Probation Service was dealing with 4,338 sex offenders in jail and 4,753 in the community, of which 430 were in probation hostels.

Drugs 'help salmonella'

Antibiotics fed to animals to make them grow are to blame for the spread of salmonella, the Soil Association says today in evidence to the Commons Agricultural Committee's inquiry into food safety. The pro-organic pressure group says that the growth-promoting antibiotics kill beneficial bacteria in animals' intestines with which the salmonella normally has to compete, and that successive governments acted unwisely in licensing antibiotics.

Two boys killed by fall

Two boys were killed when the wall of a derelict house collapsed on them yesterday morning. A third boy, aged 15, escaped unhurt and raised the alarm. Gavin Glover, 15 and Steven Coleman, 11, were killed. The wall, 4ft 6in high and 2ft thick, weighed more than 1½ tonnes. They had been playing near the 60-year-old building, an old communal wash house, on waste land close to a housing estate where they lived in Kemsley, near Sittingbourne, Kent.

Waterfront assembly

The Welsh assembly is to have a waterfront position close to Cardiff's historic Pierhead building. The decision was announced yesterday by Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary, who said the site looked outwards to the world and "would be the focus for Wales's future and make a bold statement about our aspirations as a nation". The Welsh Office has budgeted £17 million for the construction of an assembly chamber and committee rooms.

Lowry stolen in daylight

A painting by L. S. Lowry has been stolen in daylight from the Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery while the building was open to the public. Although a guard is said to have been on duty in the room, the thief was able to unscramble the picture without anyone noticing. *Young Man*, which measures 7in by 4in, was painted in 1965 and valued at about £10,000. It had been on loan from a private collector who was said to be "devastated" by the theft.

Patten says he will be honoured to chair RUC reforms for peace

By MARTIN FLETCHER
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

CHRIS PATTEN said last night that he would be "honoured" to chair the independent commission charged with reform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary provided the new peace agreement is approved in next month's referendum.

"As a former Northern Ireland minister who cares deeply about the future of the Province and who strongly supports the Good Friday agreement, I would obviously want to do anything I could to help support all those people who have been so brave in reaching this very important agreement," the former Tory party chairman told the BBC from America.

The Ulster Unionist Party, the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Police Federation welcomed the selection of a man with stature, experience and knowledge of Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein declined to comment. The only outright hostility came from Unionist opponents of the agreement, who criticised the appointment of Hong Kong's last governor sadly apt. Willie Thompson, a dissident UUP MP, said: "Most Unionists will remember Mr Patten as he stood lowering the Union Jack on Hong Kong. What we find in Northern Ireland is that the British government are slowly but surely lowering the flag."

Mr Patten, a Catholic, is well remembered in a province where he served as a junior minister from 1983 to 1985, though he antagonised some Unionists by allowing Londonderry city council to drop the "London" from its name.

Sinn Fein is demanding the complete dismantling of the 13,000-strong RUC. The SDLP wants it radically reformed. The force is more than 90 per cent Protestant. Of necessity, it patrols the streets in armoured vehicles. Its historical

baggage ranges from excesses during the early civil rights demonstrations to mistreatment of suspects and the controversial use of supergrasses.

But Unionists consider the commission a sop to republicans, and fear it will undermine the effectiveness of a force that has, in the words of its own chief constable, provided a "bulwark between anarchy and disorder" over 30 years of conflict. It has lost 277 officers.

The commission will have about six expert members, some foreign, and is to present proposals by the summer of 1999 for "future policing structures and arrangements". Crucially, those arrangements must command "widespread community support". A recent BBC poll showed no less than 66 per cent of Catholics wanted the RUC replaced by a new force, though more detailed surveys suggest most are content with the day-to-day service it provides.

Mary Bell book

Continued from page 1

was acquitted while Mary was convicted of manslaughter on the ground of diminished responsibility. She was released from prison on licence in 1980, when she was 22, and now lives in anonymity in the North East.

Ms Sereny, who wrote the definitive account of the killings and Bell's subsequent trial in *The Case of Mary Bell*, says that she had hoped for 18 years to write this book. "She tells us what she did and what she felt, what was done to her and also for her, and what she became."

But nine MPs called yesterday for the book to be banned. Lindsay Hoyle, Labour MP for Chorley, who tabled the early day motion calling for the ban, said: "I am disgusted Mary Bell is able to profit from these horrific murders. It

is extremely insulting to the parents of the victims to see that the person convicted of killing their child is allowed to cash in on their atrocities."

Ms Sereny has admitted paying Bell for her co-operation, but has refused to say how much. Hilary Rubinstein, who acted as Bell's literary agent, said yesterday that his client intended to use the money to give her daughter a better start in life than she had.

He said: "I believe that Mary Bell is deserving of our sympathy for the sustained cruelties of her early years when so much might have been done to deflect or alleviate her suffering."

He discloses that while he had given his commission to charity, Bell felt that she was entitled to the money for her daughter.

Classical triumph

A classical music television programme based on the cellist Yo Yo Ma (right) won the Golden Rose of Montreux Award. *Yo Yo Ma Inspired by Bach* was made by a Canadian company and shown on BBC2. The BBC's *Harry Enfield and Chums* won a Silver Rose for the third year running. The sitcom category was won by the BBC's spoof documentary *Operation Good Guys*.



Police dog is cleared

A champion police dog was cleared by three Court of Appeal judges over an incident when it bit a piece out of a drunken suspect's ear. The dog bit Andrew Pollard after police found youths vandalising street lights in Gomersal, West Yorkshire. Last year Mr Pollard was awarded £4,600 after he had plastic surgery for severe lacerations. The judges said releasing the dog to catch drunken suspects was not an unlawful and excessive use of force.

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Harrow school

Goliath clash with Piranha the singles cl

Calm kidnap knifeman to

Harrow master 'stole school trip money'

Geography teacher took £36,000 from funds for pupils' foreign expeditions, writes Peter Foster

A HARROW schoolmaster who organised foreign trips for his pupils stole £36,000 from parents to pay his children's school fees and his mortgage, a court was told yesterday.

Peter Jackson, 35, stole the money after descending into a spiral of debt and then tried desperately to cover his tracks. It was alleged at Wood Green Crown Court in North London. Mr Jackson, who taught geography at the school for eight years, collected thousands of pounds from parents to pay for trips to India, Florida, South Africa and the Himalayas.

Michael Logsdon, for the prosecution, told how the teacher, who was said to be highly regarded at the school, got into financial difficulties while organising a trip to Tanzania for 22 boys in the summer holidays of 1995.

During that spring and summer, as money rolled in for the £1,985-a-head trip, Mr Jackson withdrew thousands of pounds to pay for his children's school fees and a mortgage on his house in Charmaster, Dorset, which had fallen into arrears after renovation work. Mr Logsdon added: "Over a period of months money was stolen in cash, cheques or transferred between his own accounts. The money belonged to the parents, not Jackson, but he treated it as his own."

Mr Jackson, who denied 12 charges of theft and two of forgery and deception, allegedly resorted to more and more desperate measures to cover his theft, including setting up a bogus company.

In August 1995, after returning from Tanzania, Mr Jackson was facing legal action from a travel company.

Sportaculis Ltd, for failure to pay an outstanding debt of £41,500 for the trip. Five months later Mr Jackson was arrested and cautioned in the headmaster's study. Police seized documents from his school accommodation, where investigators found incriminating bar receipts, bogus receipts and a letter in which Mr Jackson asked a teacher recruitment agency for details of a deputy headmaster's post in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Mr Logsdon said: "Brazil may be a great place to pursue a teaching career, but the Crown say it would also have been a thoroughly convenient place for he and his family to be employed, well out of reach of the school, the headmaster and the bursar who were chasing him for £36,000."

Mr Jackson set up a joint bank account with his wife in April 1995 at a local branch of the Halifax Building Society to bank monies for the trip to Tanzania. It was alleged. Parents were told that the expedition, to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and visit Zanzibar, would provide character-

building experiences valued by university admissions tutors. Parents were asked to send a cheque for £300 as a deposit made out to P.J. Jackson, Zanzibar Account.

Mr Jackson ignored from the school Michael Liddiard, and the headmaster, Nicholas Bonford, that he was in danger of mixing personal and school finances. Mr Jackson was docked £99 from his salary by the bursar after he fell behind on his account at the school bookshop.

In March 1995, before the party was due to leave Britain for Zanzibar, Mr Jackson had received over £36,000 from parents, the prosecution claimed. But on March 26 statements showed the balance of the Zanzibar account was £18.88. The trip went off successfully, but not before Mr Jackson was met at Heathrow on his departure by the travel agent demanding payment for the expedition. Mr Jackson claimed the late payment of some parents, but promised that the account would be



Money belonged to the parents, but he treated it as his own

Peter Jackson



Keiko Holmes displaying the insignia of her honorary OBE yesterday

Japanese mediator honoured by Queen

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE award by the Queen yesterday of an honorary OBE to a Japanese woman who reconciles former British prisoners of war and their captives has divided veterans of the Far East campaign.

Keiko Holmes, 50, of Croydon, South London, who is the widow of a Briton, received her decoration at a private ceremony at Windsor Castle. There was an audience of former PoWs and their families. The award was given on the recommendation of the Foreign Office, anxious that Emperor Akihito should have a smooth state visit to London next month.

Mrs Holmes spent half an hour talking to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh about her work. Over the past seven years she has organised pilgrimages to Japan for more than 100 ex-POWs and their relatives and has brought Japanese to London for an annual service of reconciliation.

Mrs Holmes, an evangelical Christian, said yesterday that the award was a tribute to prisoners who went through a hard life and were looking forward in a positive and courageous way. "It is also a recognition of the Japanese people who are helping to heal wounds."

Arthur Titherington, 77, chairman of the 10,000-strong Japanese Labour Camp Survivors' Association, which plans silent protests in support of its campaign for compensation from Tokyo, said he did not agree with Mrs Holmes's approach.

Leading article, page 19

Goliath clashes with Piranha at the singles club

BY HELEN JOHNSTONE

A NAVY lieutenant nicknamed Goliath hit a woman air force officer in the face after she stepped him at a forces singles club on the Falkland Islands, a court martial heard. Lieutenant Clive Clifford, 37, was said to have touched the bottom of Flight Lieutenant Emma Lloyd, whose club nickname was Piranha.

The club known as the FISHE - the Falkland Islands Sunday Hospitality Executive - hosted get-togethers in an officers' mess. Members were given nicknames by colleagues and had to abide by a code of behaviour that included alcoholic fines, feeding each other and eating without cutlery.

The court martial in Portsmouth was told that Lieutenant Clifford was involved in two altercations with the woman member.

Lieutenant Commander Andre Spence, for the prosecution, said a large amount of alcohol had been consumed at a dinner on the night of the alleged assault, last October. Lieutenant Clifford had downed a glass of brandy, a bottle of wine and two glasses of port. He grabbed Lieutenant Lloyd's wrist, requesting she sit on his lap.

"She broke his grip and said she didn't sit on laps and went back to the bar," he said. "She was standing there when she felt a hand on her buttock. She turned round and saw Clifford and asked if he had touched her. She said she would slap him if he did it again. She felt a hand on her body, turned

round and slapped the person behind her, which was Clifford. He punched her in the cheek and the blow knocked her backwards, causing pain."

Lieutenant Lloyd suffered redness and swelling to her right cheek. In evidence she said she felt justified in slapping Lieutenant Clifford, who in turn complained of being assaulted after suffering a cut to his lip. He was arrested two days later and admitted approaching Lieutenant Lloyd and putting his hand on her hip to attract her attention. He denies charges of drunkenness and assault, claiming he raised his arm in self-defence.

Lieutenant Clifford, who has served with HMS Warrior, was stationed at Mount Pleasant airfield in the Falklands but is now based in Northwood, Middlesex.

The court martial continues today.



Lloyd: said she felt that slap was justified

Nurse who swore at man, 91, struck off

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

AN ABUSIVE male nurse who taunted a blind and disabled 91-year-old man in a nursing home was struck off a voice-activated tape recorder hidden by his daughter, a disciplinary hearing was told yesterday.

Roy Ripley, 38, a nurse at the High Grove nursing home in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, was removed from the register after being found guilty of two charges of abuse by the UK Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting. The hearing in London was told that Dorothy Mellersh concealed the device in her father's room.

Rosemary Rollason, council solicitor, told its professional conduct committee - which listened to the recordings - that Mrs Mellersh and her husband admitted her father to the home because he needed 24-hour care after a stroke.

"They were shocked when they heard Mr Ripley uttering a string of abuse, including four-letter words. The resident was registered blind and had a severe hearing impairment. Although Mr A was immobile, Mr Ripley refused to take him to the lavatory."

Mr A became increasingly distressed and because he could not explain what was wrong, his daughter hid the tape recorder in his room. The tapes disclosed Mr Ripley swearing repeatedly to a care assistant and shouting at Mr A. Mrs Mellersh moved her father to another home but he died four days later.

Mr Ripley was convicted in his absence.

Calm kidnap victim puts knifeman to sleep in car

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

CALMNESS and quick-thinking taught her by the Women's Royal Voluntary Service saved Janet Aram the day she was kidnapped at knife-point by a drug-crazed burglar.

He forced her into her car and ordered her at knife-point to drive for 70 miles looking for a quarry in which to tie her up and dump her. But as they drove around Mrs Aram, noticing he was sleepy from the drugs he had taken, turned up the car heater and talked gently to her kidnapper until he fell asleep.

Mrs Aram, 64, a former

district councillor from Somerset and a stalwart of the local Conservative party, said yesterday after her ordeal on January 26: "I thought he was going to kill me and dump my body."

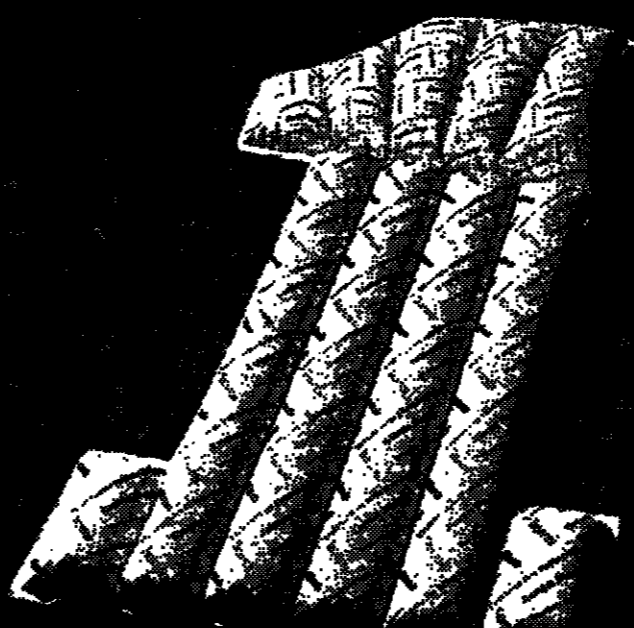
"I saw that he was starting to nod a little bit and I turned up the heating hoping he would fall asleep. "I started driving gently and started talking to him in a gentle voice about his drug addiction in the hope he would go to sleep. Finally he did. I then drove on to find somewhere safe where I could stop. I remember thinking at

least I would be in some sort of control when he told me I had to drive the car.

"He seemed to have been taking drugs and I had no idea what effect they would have on him. He said he was going to take me to a quarry where I would be tied up and left but I didn't really believe him."

The dozing drug addict awoke only when police arrived to arrest him. Lee Martin, from Frome, Somerset, was sentenced at Bristol Crown Court to 10 years in jail for kidnap and aggravated burglary.

The Thomson Travel Group Share Offer. Deadline for applications is 12 noon, Thursday 7 May 1998.



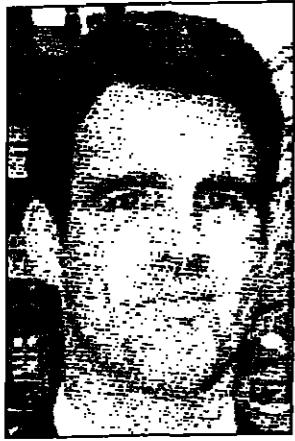
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Rape case PC 'a success with women'



By PAUL WILKINSON

A POLICEMAN who denies two charges of rape and four of indecent assault said yesterday that he often chatted up women while on the beat. "If I saw any lady whom I thought was attractive I would make inquiries about taking her out," PC John Blott told Leeds Crown Court. "I like talking to all women but I like taking the pretty ones out."

Asked by Anne Rafferty, QC, his counsel: "Are you a successful chap in taking women out?" He replied: "Yes."

Miss Rafferty: "Do you tend to have long relationships or are they one-night stands?"

PC Blott: "More likely one-night

stands, it's more fun that way." PC Blott, 33, has denied the rapes and assaults allegedly carried out at his home in New Marske, Teesside, between 1993 and 1995. He claims that sexual relations had been with the women's consent.

He would use different techniques to talk to the women he met, "whatever the circumstances required," he said. "That's the fun of it."

PC Blott said that a 16-year-old girl who he allegedly raped had asked him for his phone number. Miss Rafferty asked him: "You are a chap who can spot when any lady likes you?" He answered: "Yes Ma'am, there are certain signs." On this occasion, he said, "I sensed the vibrations, that she liked me." He

claimed they went for a walk and she offered him sex. "I was happy to oblige," he said.

In July 1994 he chatted to a Middlesbrough woman from an Italian background after carrying out a check of her car while on duty. "She was lovely," he said. "She looked like a stunning Scorpio to me."

When she arrived for the date that night, she looked "really nice", he said. "She was 6ft tall, dark skin, masses of lipstick, a shock of black curly hair and legs that went up to her shoulder blades. She was stunning."

But back at his house she at first resisted his attempts to fondle her. Later when he tried to undo her jeans

she told him: "You won't like what you will find down there." PC Blott said: "That really got me going, I thought what have I gone and done? Have I pulled a man?"

Then he saw it was a tattoo on her stomach of a devil. "I laughed at her," he said. "She didn't like that and hit me hard in the solar plexus. It caused me a great deal of pain. Effectively that was the end of the evening."

He denied that the blow she struck was a knee in the groin after he had tried to grope her three times and been stopped.

On the second allegation of rape, in March 1995, involving a garage receptionist, he claimed the woman had wanted him to take her out and give her a good time because she was

bored with her job and upset with her boyfriend. "She was more than willing to go out with me, she was definitely a player," he said. "I intended to wine and dine her and see what developed."

When he picked her up he said she looked "stunning". She wore a leather jacket zipped to the neck, "a very, very short" dolly dress, black tights and knee-length high-heeled boots. Later he saw that her dress had a strap top "which barely covered her nipples" and she was not wearing a bra.

He claimed that on the way home she agreed they would have sex. "She was happy, more than happy to do it" he said.

The trial continues.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Equal pay victory for scientist

A woman scientific officer has received seven years' back pay after complaining that she had been paid less than men on similar grades since 1991. Susan Whytock, from Cambridge, accepted £24,531 from the Medical Research Council. Ms Whytock, whose claim for wage discrimination was backed by the Equal Opportunities Commission, had worked at the council's molecular biology laboratory in Cambridge for 28 years. She has taken early retirement.

Haughey fails

Charles Haughey lost a High Court attempt to prevent a government-appointed tribunal studying his finances. The former Irish Prime Minister claimed the tribunal, set up after he admitted taking £1.3 million from a businessman, infringed his privacy.

Highway hold-up

A robber with a makeshift flame-thrower held up a bus run by the Stagecoach company at Llanellen, South Wales. He threatened Raymond Parry, 45, the driver, with a gas canister and cigarette lighter, forcing him to hand over two cash boxes.

Priest abused sick

A Roman Catholic priest who sexually abused altar boys and sick children in hospital was remanded in custody for sentencing at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court. Fr Ivan Payne, 54, who abused nine boys, admitted 13 sample charges of indecent assault.

Hedge row settled

Villagers in Marbury, Cheshire, have won a battle to move a hedge back by a yard at an accident blackspot. The Environment Department overturned a local council's objections that were based on new legislation protecting hedgerows.

Muckrakers' day

A Yorkshire Water sewage treatment works at Esbott, West Yorkshire, was visited by 23,000 people when it held an open day, beating tourist attractions near by. The Brunel Pansongue Museum at Haworth drew only 353 people on the same day.

Bar leaps to defence of QCs with attack on 'false' pay figures

THE top-earning legal aid lawyers in the Government's "fat cat" list yesterday hit back with detailed and swift rebuttals. They denounced the figures as misleading, inaccurate and "plain wrong".

In a skilful PR move, the Bar was ready with a researched response over the Government's highest paid 40 barristers, who claimed that in many cases costs had been recovered from the losing side.

The figures are certain to bolster the Government's case to scrap civil legal aid in personal injury cases. But the legal profession yesterday made intense efforts to discredit the figures — a sign of the increasing tension between the two sides over legal aid reform.

One QC, David Allan, calculated that out of the £319,919 paid to him in 1996-97, only £28,000 would not be recovered from the defendants. The Legal Aid Board would recoup more than 91 per cent of its outlay.

Stephen Irwin, QC, listed as earning between £190,000 and £229,000, said that he could identify only one lost case from the list. The "great majority" of cases were settled or won, he says.

Some figures, the Bar said, were "just plain wrong". Malcolm Swift, QC, listed as

Frances Gibb reports on claims that many fees were paid by the losing side

is still likely to attract public support for the laying of regulations in July to remove civil legal aid in personal injury cases.

The Law Society published research yesterday that appeared to undermine recent government studies showing that law firms would make a good living out of "no win, no fee" work.

The research, by Sheffield University, also concludes that people with difficult or complex personal injury claims will find it hard to find a solicitor prepared to take the risk of taking their claim on a "no win, no fee" basis.

Such work is suitable for routine personal injury work such as road accidents and simple accidents in the workplace. But the arrangements would not work for other kinds of personal injury claims, such as medical negligence, industrial disease and complex accidents at work — cases "where considerable investigations need to be made before it is possible whether to decide to take the case on".

Solicitors do not believe that poor clients could themselves afford the initial costs or insurance premiums needed to cover the risk of losing and being held liable for the other side's costs, the report says.



Martin Day, Ronald Thwaites, QC, and Michael Hill, QC

Big figures are 'plain wrong'

TOP 20 BARRISTERS

Over £500,000
Alan Jones QC; Malcolm Swift QC*
£450-499,000
Peter Took QC; Elizabeth Lawson QC; Stephen Batten QC; Anthony Avilidge QC; Michael Hill QC
£400-449,000
Ronald Thwaites QC; Andrew Trollope QC; Stuart Stevens*
£350-399,000
Oliver Blunt QC; Stephen Leslie QC; Winston Roddick QC; Peter Fainberg QC; Timothy Faggatt QC; Anthony Barry QC; Miss Clara Montgomery
£320-349,000
Patrick Hamilton QC; J Richardson
*The department was unable to confirm the figures with the individual concerned. (This will include some payments previously published for 1995/96.)

Over £200,000
H. David R. Hood; John B.W. McDonnell QC; Daniel J. Brennan

TOP EARNERS

QC
£270-319,999
C. David Allan QC; Richard Maxwell QC; Judith M.F. Parker QC*; Michael G. Bloch; Philip J. Hooper; Andrew D.H. Trollope QC
£230-269,999
Ian G.F. Karsten QC; Joanna Dodson QC
£190-229,000
Alan E. Levy QC; Alastair J.D. Wilson QC; Deborah A. Easton; Stephen J. Irwin QC; Henry J. Seight; Alison Ball QC; Charles J. Lewis; Paul M. McCormick; Charles A.F. Howard
* denotes figure not confirmed with individual concerned

SOLICITORS' FIRMS

Over £2.5 million
Freeth Cartwright Hunt Dicks** (Nottingham)
£2.6-43.49 million
Irwin Mitchell (Sheffield, Leeds, Birmingham)

£2-2.5 million
Alexander Harris & Co* (Manchester); Fisher Meredith (South London); Nelsons (Leeds); Leigh Day & Co (London); McGrath & Co (Birmingham)
£1.6-1.99 million
Owen White (Chertsey, Surrey); Joseph Hill & Co (London); Henry Hyams & Co (Leeds); Hodge Jones & Allen (London); Evill & Coleman (London); TV Edwards (London)
£1.6-1.79 million
The Johnson Partnership (Nottingham); Brendan Flemming (Birmingham); Powell Spencer & Partners (London); Jones Maidment Wilson (Aldershot); Bindman & Partners (London); The Smith Partnership (Burton on Trent, Derby, Stoke on Trent); Young & Lee (Birmingham)
** denotes figure not confirmed with firm concerned
* includes payments for work done by other solicitor firms and counsel in multi-party actions which were administered by Freeth Cartwright Hunt and Dicks and which consequently do not appear in other firms' figures

Over £2 million
Hartneys (London); Burton Copeland (London, Manchester)
£1-1.99 million
Garstang (Bolton, London)
£0.50-0.99 million
Offenbach & Co (London); Irwin Mitchell (Sheffield, Leeds, Birmingham); Derek Abridge & Co (Tottenham); Russell Cooke Pottier & Chapman (Kingston upon Thames, Surrey and London); Jones Maidment Wilson (Aldershot)
£0.40-0.49 million
Joseph Hill & Co (London); Foinette Quin (Milton Keynes); Trevor Cox (York); Edward Fall Bradshaw & Westerson (London); Denis Abridge & Co (Barnoldswick); Mackeys (London); Maidments (Manchester)
£35-0.39 million
Farshaw Porter & Hazlehurst (Birkenhead, New Ferry); Powell Spencer & Partners (London); J Keith Park & Co (Liverpool); Stephenson Harwood (London).

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Parents as baby-fail safe

Akazard and hep. says doc

Rain stop play Oxford revele

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Al Fayed makes £2m bid to save Diana's school

MOHAMED AL FAYED has bid more than £2 million for the Kent school where Diana, Princess of Wales, was a pupil to turn it into a centre for traumatised children in her memory.

If Mr Al Fayed is successful, the school will be renamed. Popular options are the People's Princess School at West Heath and the Lady Di School at West Heath.

The Harrods chairman, whose elder son Dodi died in the Paris car crash with the Princess, stepped in with the offer for West Heath school in Sevenoaks shortly before the deadline on April 15. Most of the 13 other offers were from property developers.

The school was put on the market for £1.3 million by Deloitte and Touche, the receivers appointed by the Charity Commission, after it closed last year because of falling pupil registrations and mounting debts. It is expected to fetch more than £2 million because of its prime position in the commuter belt.

If Mr Al Fayed's offer is accepted, he will hand the buildings over to the Beth Marie Centre, a school for traumatised children in Sevenoaks. The centre has been keen to move to West Heath but had not been able to raise funds.

Mr Al Fayed's bid is thought to be the only one on

'People's Princess centre' would take trauma children in memory of her work, writes

Mark Henderson

behalf of a charity. "I am hopeful that my bid will be looked upon favourably," he said. "Every single parent whose child has been helped by the staff at the Beth Marie Centre would vouch for their wonderful achievements."

Presently funded by Kent County Council, the centre offers secondary education to children who find it difficult to attend mainstream schools. Past pupils have included children with eating disorders, long-term illnesses, learning difficulties, drug problems and a history of sexual or physical abuse. It takes its name from Beth Marie Worcester, a pupil who died of cancer in 1980.

The centre would be able to double its capacity to 80 pupils and offer boarding and a sixth form for the first time. There are also plans to open a research and training centre on teaching traumatised child-

ren, and to take pupils from the whole country and abroad.

Trustees include Peter Sissons, the broadcaster, who lives in Sevenoaks, Tommy Cookson, headmaster of Sevenoaks School, and Mary Corbett, a West Heath teacher who taught the Princess. Baron Weatherill, the former Speaker and MP for nearby Orpington, is patron of the trust and Ruth Rudge, the Princess's former headmistress at West Heath, is a vocal supporter.

Valerie May, founder and head of the centre, said: "I can't think of anything else that would be as appropriate a way to commemorate Diana. It's the kind of place you can just imagine her wanting to cut the ribbon to open herself."

Mr Al Fayed, who has a home near by in Oxted and a daughter at Sevenoaks School, was persuaded to support the Beth Marie project after meeting Mrs May. He has also undertaken to guarantee the school's financial future.

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund may also back the project. The French magazine *Paris-Match* was yesterday ordered by a court in Paris to pay £5,000 in damages to Mr Al Fayed for publishing an intrusive picture — the so-called "first kiss" — of his son Dodi and the Princess a few days before they died.



Mr and Mrs Evans at their "bungalow". The council says that what began as a mobile home 13 years ago is no longer mobile enough

Moving tale of couple who put down roots

JIM and Yvonne Evans have spent 13 years creating the home they wanted. Steps lead up to an imposing porch, where double doors are flanked by statues and bay windows beneath a tiled roof. Their home stands in a mature garden featuring a conservatory and patio.

But the local council wants the couple to undo much of the work that has cost 13 years' toil and tens of thousands of pounds. It says the house looks too much like... a house. There is one feature that the council thinks has not been made enough of: the wheels hidden beneath a fake brick skirt. The Evanses live in a caravan.

They would prefer the term



How the caravan looked when it arrived on site

"mobile home" and the council agrees. It is dismayed by what it sees as the structure's lack of mobility. The council wants the skirting, conservatory and patio removed.

The couple bought a plot at Aldridge, West Midlands, in

1985, with permission to live in a mobile home. Mr Evans, 55, a self-employed agricultural spray painter, said: "The whole problem seems to rest on the fact that my wife and I have worked extremely hard to make this the sort of home

we could be proud of. But it is still a mobile home and I could prove that by moving it in a matter of a few hours. I think the council objects to the fact that it looks like a proper home — which is what we all want, isn't it?"

"If the place was an eyesore I could understand their concern but we think it looks super and certainly doesn't lower the tone of the area. I have spent my life savings on making this place into something where we could retire in peace."

Mrs Evans, 55, said: "This is making us both very stressed. It is not a permanent structure but we have added features on to make it more attractive and comfortable."

Michael Bird, leader of the Tory-controlled Walsall Borough Council, said: "We cannot allow people to just flout planning regulations. We will pursue them until they comply with the law of the land."

"They have attempted to create a permanent structure and we won't stand for it. Personally, I think the whole thing is an eyesore and a blot on the landscape."

Sylvia Bottrill, one of the Evanses' neighbours, said that she had originally objected to the work they had done but she has changed her mind. "We cannot object," she said. "I would much prefer to look at a lovely mobile home than something that looks like a caravan site."

Rothschilds family seat a snip at only £7 million

By Rachel Kelly, Property Correspondent

ONE of England's most sumptuous and extravagant Victorian houses has been cut in price by £3 million a year after it was put on the market at £10 million.

No buyers have come forward for *Mentmore Towers*, Buckinghamshire, the former family seat of the Rothschilds which for 20 years has been owned by the Maharishi Foundation, the transcendental meditation movement. The agents Savills said that the house had been priced at a premium last May in the hope of attracting a private buyer. However, an institutional buyer was now thought more likely and the price had been cut to about £7 million.

Nicholas Ashe, from the buying agent Property Vision, said the house's architecture was unlikely to appeal to a private buyer. "It's not a beautiful period building compared to Luton Hoo, for exam-

ple in Bedfordshire, which is on sale for £25 million. Nor does it have sufficient acres for someone interested in an estate." The house is for sale with 81 acres. Sales brochures stress the house's potential as "a headquarters, residential, institutional, residential, training or hotel uses."

The Grade I listed house is set in the Vale of Aylesbury and has 50 bedrooms, five state reception rooms and a grand entrance hall. Its interior is in good condition and the house has a new central heating system. It was built as an extended hunting lodge for the Rothschilds in 1851 but since 1978 has hosted followers of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The foundation bought the house for £247,000 and is planning bigger, purpose-built headquarters. The house was designed for Baron Meyer Amschel de Rothschild by Sir Joseph Paxton, designer of

Crystal Palace, and G.H. Stokes, his son-in-law. It was once a treasury of European art with paintings by Rembrandt, Murillo and Turner.

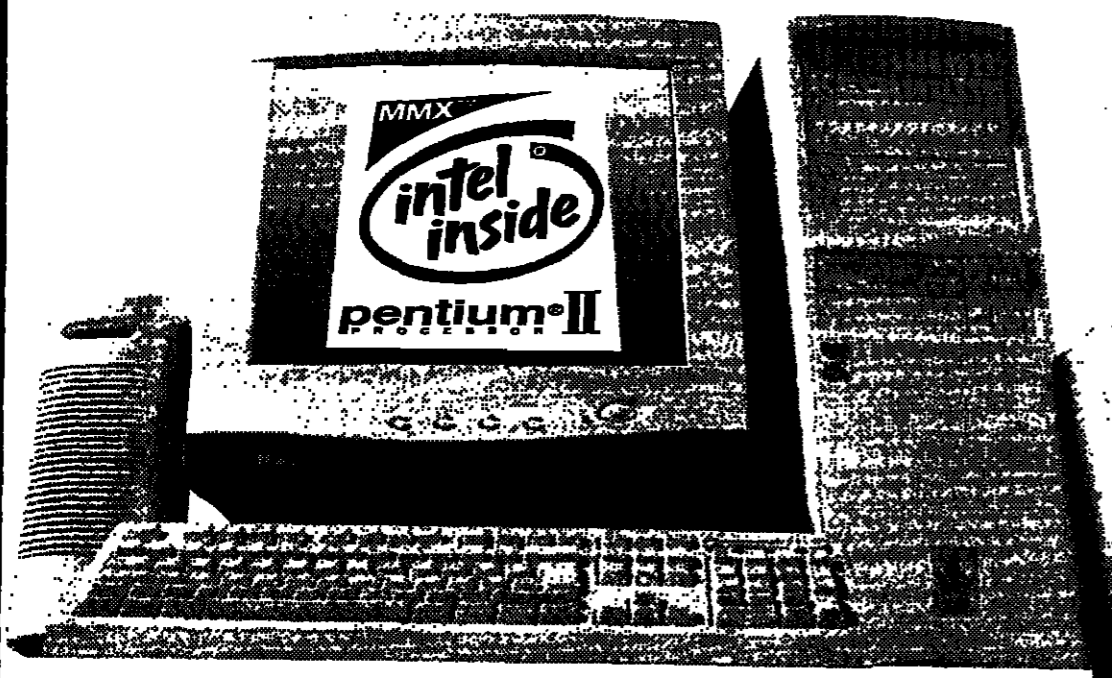
When the fifth Earl of Rosebery, later a Liberal Prime Minister, married the baron's daughter in 1878, he expanded the collection. Many of the contents were auctioned in 1977 when the then owner, the 7th Earl of Rosebery, faced huge death duties. Confidentiality clauses mean that its true selling price is unlikely ever to be known. A foreigner may be a likely buyer and the Crown Prince of Kuwait is said to have expressed an interest. One option that has been explored and abandoned is to turn the house into a permanent film location. The new owner will enjoy a fireplace, in the Italianate entrance hall, taken from Rubens's house in Antwerp and estimated to be worth £750,000.

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| BIRMINGHAM | EDINBURGH | MERKY HILL-MIDDLEY | READING | STOKE |
| BURTON | GRESHAM | NORTH SHIELDS | SHEFFIELD | SWANSEA |
| GLASGOW | NORTHAMPTON | SOUTHAMPTON | SLOUGH | SWINDON |
| CANTERBURY | HIDDERSFIELD | SPRUCKFIELD | WALSLEY | |
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Island children read more after arrival of TV

Alexandra Frean studies a survey that rebuts fears over the small screen's bad influences

CHILDREN living on a remote island which television did not reach until 1995 have disproved the common belief that the small screen encourages anti-social behaviour, violence and less reading.

A study of 800 children on the British dependency of St Helena, in the South-East Atlantic, found that the shared experience of watching television made them less likely to tease each other and to fight, and more likely to enjoy books.

Tony Charlton, of Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, who is leading the research, said that the children had been provided with a new shared experience. "For the first time, they have a commonality of experience through television. The day after watching a television programme they can come together and talk about it, in much the same way as viewers here may talk about last night's episode of *Coronation Street*."

The evidence is based on 900 minutes of video footage of the children's free play, recorded during school breaks, and on diaries kept by nearly 300 of the children. Professor Charlton said that before television was introduced, the three to eight-year-olds tended to play on their own or in twos and threes. Afterwards, they congregated in larger gatherings of six to eight children.

The children have been watching satellite channels, including the Cartoon Network, CNN, SuperSport and a

film channel. Levels of violence in the programmes were slightly higher than on British television but the average amounts of violence in minutes per programme were lower at 0.6 minutes, compared with 1.6 minutes.

Although the video footage showed that children were indulging in some imitative behaviour, there was no evidence that they tried to reenact screen violence. "The kind of thing we are seeing is children turning their coats inside out and draping them over their shoulders, like Superman's cloak," Professor Charlton said.

Before television was introduced the children of St Helena appeared to be among the most well-adjusted in the world, with few showing behavioural problems. Television appears not to have altered that because of the island's sense of community, Professor Charlton believes.

"Good parenting and schooling, alongside a strong sense of community, have all contributed to creating an environment which has pre-

vented television from exerting a negative influence upon young children," he said.

Andy Hannon, who has been working with Professor Charlton, said there was no evidence that television was causing children to neglect their studies.

Although time spent doing homework fell slightly, by 0.19 per cent, time spent reading increased by nearly 1 per cent. The number of children who cited reading as their favourite activity increased from 3.5 to 6 per cent.

"This may be because they now spend more time indoors waiting for their favourite programmes to come on, and that they use that time to read," Dr Hannon said.

The amount of unorganised play fell by 4.4 per cent and time spent sleeping went down by 2.7 per cent.

Children and Shakespeare, page 30



Schoolchildren on St Helena: since television, they spend a little less time on homework but more on reading

Films face screen test for lottery funding

By DALYA ALBERGE ARTS CORRESPONDENT

AUDIENCES should help to pick potential British film hits that deserve grants from the National Lottery, the Arts Council suggested yesterday. Its film panel proposed Hollywood-style audience screenings as part of a multimillion-pound cinema distribution scheme. The public could be recruited to test the "playability" of films before release.

British film-makers complain that Hollywood dominates British cinema chains. Between 1992 and 1996, says yesterday's report, British films represented only 12 per cent of films released in Britain. Under the proposals, production companies will be able to apply for partnership funding for extra prints, promotion and advertising.

It costs up to £1 million to release a film in Britain: about £3 million a year is likely to be available for distribution from the Arts Council's lottery film programme.

Film, page 30

Equal pay victory for scientist

A scientific officer... equal pay... victory...

Haughey fails

Haughey failed... attempt to... fail...

Highway hold

Highway hold... power held... hold...

Priest abused

Priest abused... Catholic... abused...

George row

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Parents fail to teach Bible and prayers

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

BEDTIME prayers and Sunday school are disappearing from family life, according to a report by the Church of Scotland. Many parents are said to be ignorant of even the simplest children's prayers and Bible stories.

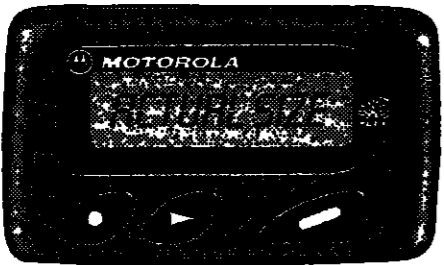
"The church dare not make any assumptions relating to parents about the promotion of the Christian faith in the home," says the report into children's worship by the Board of Parish Education. "Without the co-operation of parents or guardians, the Church's task of nurturing faith in children is rendered extremely difficult, if not impossible."

The number of young people at services has de-

clined, and parishes find it difficult to recruit volunteer teachers and youth leaders. Sunday school is said to be less relevant when children have more access to grown-up values through television and the Internet. The Rev Stewart Smith, the board's convener, said: "We cannot assume that everyone knows the basics of the Bible. That does not apply any more."

The report will be presented to the Kirk's General Assembly next month. Apart from making after-school clubs more appealing, the main thrust of any changes are likely to concentrate on giving parents better support and religious training, perhaps using the Internet.

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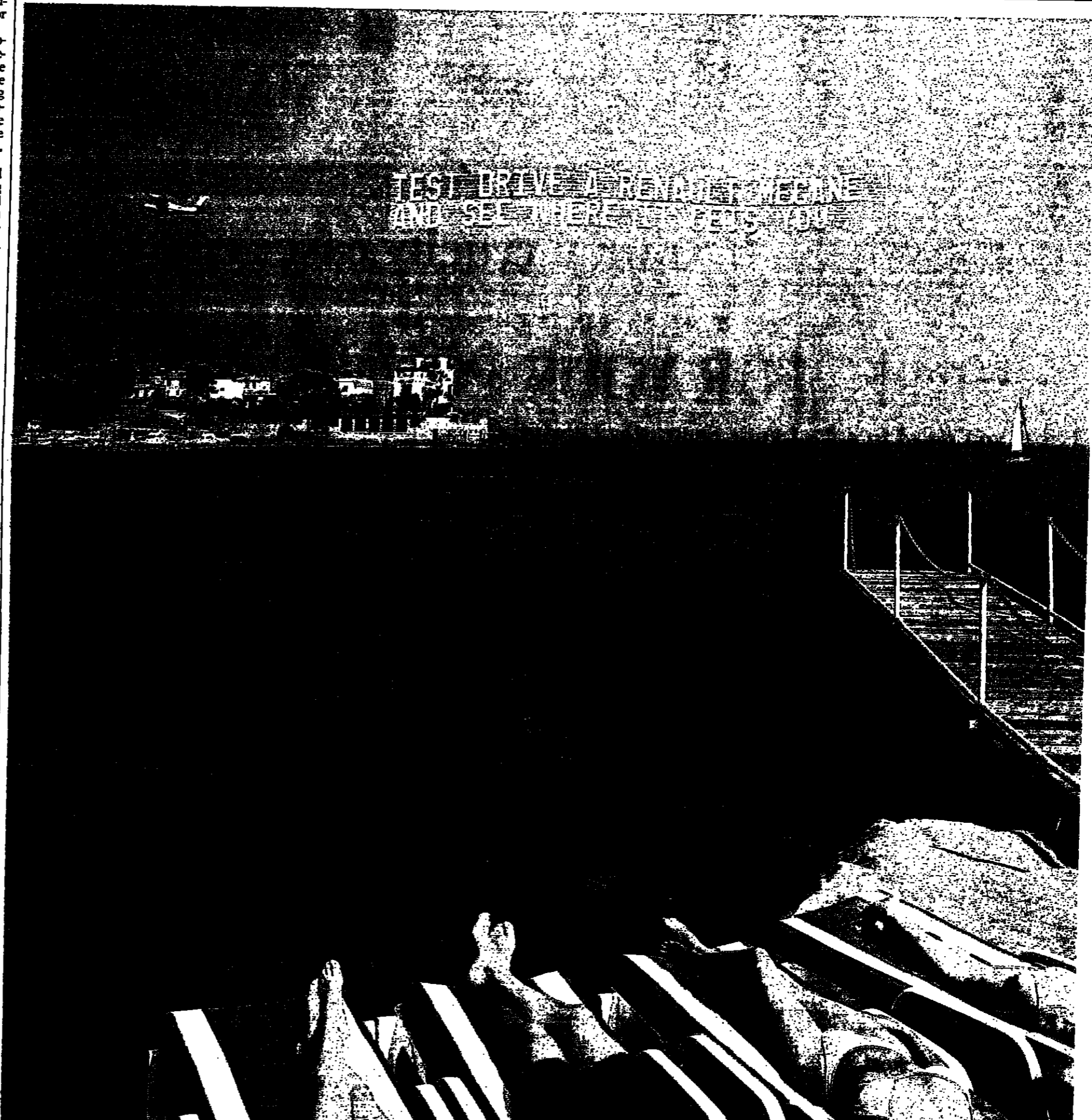
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New toothpaste could eradicate decay

Breakthrough could consign dentist's drill to scrapheap by 2003, writes Nick Nuttall

TOOTHPASTE that could lead to the eradication of tooth decay could be on the market in five years after British scientists developed a vaccine against the bacteria that cause cavities.

The vaccine contains antibodies against the bacterium *Streptococcus mutans*, which makes the acids that attack teeth. Tests show that the antibodies can stop bacteria from sticking to teeth and causing plaque.

The breakthrough, by a team at Guy's Hospital dental school in London, comes after 25 years of research and millions of pounds of funding from industry and organisations including the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome

Trust. The researchers, in collaboration with Planet Biotechnology of California, have also managed to produce the antibodies in genetically engineered tobacco plants.

It should mean a potentially cheap and plentiful supply of the antibodies. Tom Lehner, of the school and one of the scientists involved, said that he expected the development to lead to the eradication of tooth decay. "I think it's the beginning of the end, quite frankly," he said. With adequate support for further trials, the vaccine could be available to the public in about four

years. Professor Lehner added that dentists would initially offer the treatment but eventually self-administration would be possible with the vaccine incorporated in toothpaste, mouthwashes and tablets.

Tooth decay, or dental caries, has a documented history stretching back to the Pharaohs. Fluoridisation of water, better diet and oral hygiene have led to a dramatic fall in tooth decay. But Professor Lehner said that caries remained a problem, with half of all children having at least one by the age of five and three quarters of all

those aged 17. He said there was increasing concern about a rise in tooth decay because of people living longer and retaining their teeth. Moreover, the increased eating of refined sugar in developing countries was making it a new health problem overseas.

In the preliminary trial, 15 dental students and other volunteers had the vaccine dripped over their teeth twice a week for three weeks. The treatment was then stopped, and it was found that four months later the volunteers were still protected against tooth decay. The scientists

believe protection could last at least six months, and possibly much longer. Before the vaccine is applied, the mouth has to be completely sterilised with anti-bacterial mouthwash. Molecules in the vaccine fasten to the bacteria so they cannot stick to the teeth, and are washed away. Long-term protection occurs because the teeth are gradually recolonised by the other bacteria or mouth flora that had previously been removed. These harmless or useful micro-organisms fill all the space available, so that even when the antibody defences are lowered,

there is no room left for the caries bacteria, which take a long time to reappear.

Dr Julian Ma, another member of the Guy's team, said people should still brush their teeth and refrain from eating too many sweets. The vaccine did not stop gum decay and "if you overload the system too much, eat sugar all the time and never brush your teeth, you can overcome the protection; you have to be sensible", he said.

The scientists said that the research could pave the way for a range of new vaccines against diseases that are found in bodily fluids, including venereal disease and even HIV.

Patients checked for risk on transplant from pigs

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

SAMPLES from 150 patients who have been given living pig tissue are being analysed to see if they contain pig viruses.

If they show no infection, the Cambridge-based transplant company Imutran will go ahead with a phased programme of experiments that may lead to the first kidney transplant from its genetically engineered pigs within five years.

An informal moratorium has so far prevented pig-to-human transplants, prompted by fears that retroviruses might infect the organ recipients, in the worst case causing an epidemic. Imutran scientists believe the risks are small and that pig organs are the solution to growing waiting lists for transplants.

The current study is in co-operation with the Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, and involves samples from 150 patients out of hundreds worldwide who have had emergency treatments placing them in direct contact with living pig tissue. These include patients who have their blood perfused through pigs' spleens, kidneys or livers, to provide temporary support to their own failing organs, or who have received transplants of pig skin or the islet cells from the pancreas to treat diabetes.

Results should be ready by July. Imutran scientists are also examining monkeys that have been given pig organs to see if they are infected by the retroviruses.

If the human samples show any sign of the retrovirus crossing the species barrier into man, the company will review its strategy. Dr Corinne Savill of Imutran said. If not, they will proceed to a small trial in which patients with liver failure will be hooked to a transgenic pig liver for up to 48 hours. The pig's liver will be used as a "liver dialysis" machine, without actually being transplanted.

If that works, and has no ill-effects, then a series of kidney transplants will be carried out.

Doctors' words may make their patients sicker

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

CANCER specialists are often so bad at breaking bad news to patients that they make them more unwell, research has discovered.

Failure to explain the consequences, course and treatment of the condition caused "doctor-induced" psychological problems. Gordon McVie, the director-general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said yesterday. "Our communication skills are appalling," he said.

Lesley Fallowfield, head of the campaign's psychological oncology group, found that a third of breast cancer patients felt they had been badly informed about what was happening to them. Two years later their level of anxiety and depression about their illness was twice as great as women who felt they had been well-informed.

"Although they spend years in medical school learning about how to treat disease, most doctors never have any training in how to communicate with their patients. No matter how long they work, they never improve," Professor Fallowfield said.

In a paper published today in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, she says the difficulties that doctors face include relatives withholding the truth from patients, being truthful while maintaining hope, and challenging denial. Bad communications were

at the heart of the majority of complaints to the NHS Ombudsman. Professor Fallowfield, who is based at University College London, said. In addition to the obvious difficulties of explaining to patients why their child was likely to die, doctors were having to deal with new problems such as the "Internet patient" who arrives for a consultation with a sheaf of information obtained by surfing the Net.

"Patients feel that any breakthrough they read about is going to be available as treatment immediately in their clinic and they feel they must be getting second-class service if they do not receive it," Professor Fallowfield said.

With a £250,000 grant from the charity, the professor has taught 178 senior specialists how to communicate better with patients. She said one doctor complained that he was suffering from "compassion fatigue" which made him feel that all patients were boring.

□ The number of legal actions brought by patients against doctors is rising by 15 per cent a year and compensation is increasing at the same pace, according to the annual report of the Medical Defence Union. The organisation, which represents 160,000 doctors in Britain and abroad, paid £48 million compensation last year, to patients harmed by medical accidents.



Champ, left, and Digby are among the 177,000 animals taken in annually by the RSPCA. Dogs were the most commonly mistreated

Animal cruelty cases rise by 16 per cent

By Michael Hornsby

THE number of people convicted of cruelty to animals rose by 16 per cent last year, according to the RSPCA.

Dogs were the most frequent victims of mistreatment, with the number of reported incidents of cruelty rising from 892 in 1996 to 1,092 last year. Cruelty to cats went up from 235 incidents to 294. Figures released yesterday by the RSPCA showed that convictions for all animal cruelty rose from 2,282 in 1996 to 2,650 last year, the highest for five years. The society

spent £1.7 million prosecuting people accused of animal cruelty, £200,000 more than in 1996.

Richard Davies, head of the charity's inspectorate, said: "While public donations allow us to bring the perpetrators of cruelty to justice, it is the many animals who suffer at the hands of cruel owners who pay the ultimate price. It is incredibly frustrating for RSPCA inspectors, who work so hard to prevent cruelty, to continue to see an increase in the number of animals found abused and living in appalling conditions. Living after an

animal involves care, cost and commitment and people should not take on pets if these essential requirements cannot be met."

RSPCA staff rescued a total 8,255 animals from danger last year and took into care a further 169,346 unwanted, sick and injured animals. "Dogs have always topped the cruelty league," Ros Varnes, an RSPCA spokeswoman, said. "They need more care and exercise than cats and are also more costly to feed and keep, so more of them are abandoned by their owners." The South West had the

lowest number of convictions for animal cruelty, with 96, compared with 570 in the North East, the worst area.

Roger Gale, Conservative MP for Thanet North and chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Welfare Group, said: "While I am of course pleased that RSPCA inspectors are bringing abusers to court, the fact remains that there are still some courts that are not prepared to throw the book at the perpetrators and ban them from owning animals — for life if necessary."

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Angling rivers in decline as salmon catches drop by 40%

King of fish deposed by changes to environment, writes Nick Nuttall

SALMON are fast disappearing from the best angling rivers in England and Wales. Catches in 1997 were among the worst on record, the Environment Agency says today.

On the Wye, once the best salmon river in England and Wales, spring salmon are almost extinct. The Itchen in Hampshire, once another fine salmon river, is also suffering; last year's run was just 246 fish when a minimum of 900 are needed to sustain the population. Global warming, intensive agriculture and drought are blamed.

The number of salmon caught in nets was the lowest recorded at 31,480, 39 per cent less than the average for the previous five years. The catch declared by anglers, adjusted

for under-recording, was 13,706, 38 per cent lower than the previous five-year average.

Nationally the overall level of spawning in 1997 was only around 60 per cent of that needed to maintain healthy, sustainable stocks, the report says. It also highlights a long-term reduction in larger salmon returning in the spring.

The agency has linked some of the decline with global warming in the northwestern Atlantic where salmon go to feed. Researchers in Canada and Britain have found that the area of sea available for feeding salmon has fallen by a

fifth because of meltwater from the Arctic lowering water temperatures.

Inland, modern farming methods have caused river beds to silt up, a disaster for salmon which need to lay their eggs in clean river gravels. Low river flows during the spring and summer of 1995 and 1996 may also have affected the survival of young salmon.

Nigel Milner, head of the Environment Agency's new Salmon and Trout Fisheries National Centre, said: "Action plans are being prepared for individual rivers." The agen-

cy has been trying a range of methods to improve stocks, including narrowing rivers to increase flows which clean up silted gravel beds, building fish passes and trying to reduce pollution.

Chris Poupard of the Salmon and Trout Association yesterday blamed the Government for not acting to conserve stocks. He said Greenland had been showing "admirable restraint" while netmen off the North East coast were allowed to take relatively large catches.

Mr Poupard said the Irish Government allowed netmen with traditional rights to take some 350,000 salmon off the coast — fish heading for Welsh, Scottish and southern English rivers.

Elephants make it big for gardeners

By Simon de Brunelles

GARDENERS are to help a zoo to dispose of three tonnes of animal droppings left by its animals each day. The manure is being turned into high-quality organic compost for sale around Britain.

It means that the elephants Duchess and Gay, the rhinos Mickey, Dale and Gracie, and the giraffes Judy and Paddy may have an influence way beyond their lives at Paignton Zoo in South Devon.

The DIY chain B&Q intends to sell Zoo Poo in every one of its 282 stores at a cost of £2.99 for a ten-litre bag. A company spokesman said: "It is organic, very rich and designed to be mixed with other compost or soils. It is perhaps less effective on acidic soil but especially good if the soil is of poor quality or based on clay."

Deirdre Holloway, spokeswoman for the zoo, said: "Clearing away manure takes up most of our keepers' time. With such a giant amount, we were having difficulty." The problem came to the attention of Eco-Sci, a compost company, which offered to process



The new compost sold as "jumbo enriched"

the manure. The giant droppings are taken to the company's site in Plymouth and mixed with shredded garden material. They are then left for three months, mechanically turned and oxygenated and transferred to a maturation pile for nine months.

The finished product is said to be sterile and odour free. Ms Holloway said: "The manure is especially good, because it is produced by herbivores."

Legal victory over sex operations bill

By A Correspondent

THREE transsexual men have won permission to bring a High Court challenge against a health authority's refusal to pay for sex-change operations.

A judge gave them leave to make urgent applications for judicial review against North West Lancashire Health Authority after Stephanie Harrison, their counsel, said they were suffering "severe psychological distress".

Miss Harrison said that the authority had been operating an inflexible and unlawful

policy of denying treatment to transsexuals. Gerard Clarke, for the authority, argued that the courts should be slow to intervene when clinical judgments were made about "precious healthcare resources".

Mr Justice Keene said he would grant the applications chiefly in terms of the alleged inflexibility of the authority's policy.

The three transsexuals, who cannot be named for legal reasons, cannot afford private treatment, which they say can cost as much as £10 an hour.

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The Millennium Dome is Blairism writ large. Today *Times* writers enter two more zones to examine the state we're in

No room in blender for all the leftovers

"What the future holds for your community" — has the rise of people's power made Britain a fairer, more class-free society, or are more communities feeling dispossessed by the creation of a homogenous, middle class?



By Alan Hamilton

Calling for a classless society was a mistake by John Major. Tony Blair knew better and instead made us all "new" Labour. He even tried to rope in the Queen to his new national chumminess, peopling her golden wedding lunch with "ordinary" folks. Within hours of her former daughter-in-law's death, he was sound-biting about a "People's Princess" and led a wave of emotion-letting, to the embarrassment of many Britons who felt that grief should be personal, and not the stuff of the *Nine O'Clock News*.

Parliament, believing it to be her one chance in the year to demonstrate the unity of Crown, Parliament and People, and that she, not the tenant of Downing Street, is head of state. Among her subjects, working, middle and some upper classes combined with business and unions last May to oust the tired Tories. "Partnership" was the mantra of the incomers. But one year on, the coalition has frayed to reveal excluded margins. Labour's Left is marginalised by the massive majority. Old Labour activists are submerged by the vast new Blairite intake, and in their lonely battles over benefit cuts they are dismissed as "the

usual suspects". Equally marginalised are the aristocracy, facing the removal of their hereditary right to sit in the Lords. Back in their shires, an urban and suburban majority seeks to kill their right to hunt, while demanding a right to roam unfettered through fields of standing barley. The countryside can easily feel that, to new Labour, it is a foreign country. And it is not just the toffs on horseback. Labour's left-wing grassroots, which kept the party alive if unelectable during the wilderness years, finds that its councillors face tough new discipline from party headquarters, a loss of candidate

selection powers to Mission Control at Millbank Tower, and no discretion over how to campaign. Equally, the local authorities on which those same councillors sit are still not trusted with more money to improve services, nor with running their own schools, which they must now do in partnership with business in Education Action Zones. The workplace is no better. The broader union membership could easily feel forgotten as the manifesto pledge on statutory recognition is diluted. But whether in the thick of the chumminess or on the margins, is Britain a better place to live? Is it safer? You are certainly safe if you are one of the four teenage offenders in the new Medway secure training centre near Rochester, where for £2,500 per person per week you will be looked after by no fewer than 100 staff. Overall, recorded crime has fallen but violent crime rose by 6,000 offences to 350,000. Still, there were 5,124 more people in prison last week than when Labour took office. Do the



Not everyone feels like one of the New Labour chums: the Countryside Alliance protest last month

criminals feel safe? There is certainly no shortage of lawyers in the Government to represent them. As Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, with his somewhat arrogant public manner and expensive wallpaper, has not quite got the hang of chumminess. He was regarded initially as the legal profession's friend, having just come from the Bar himself. But he launched almost at once into a

"fat cats" attack on high-earning QCs, infuriating former colleagues who saw hypocrisy writ large. But new Labour has at least ensured plenty of work for the legal profession, with the introduction of nanny-state curfews and reparation orders for wayward youth, and parenting orders for their wayward elders. Even new Labour has trouble with its own children: Jack Straw, firmly

opposed to the decriminalisation of drugs, was mightily embarrassed to have his 17-year-old son unveiled as a very minor cannabis dealer. The Home Secretary, a model new Labour parent, marched young William round to Kennington police station, where the lad escaped with a caution. For all its chumminess, new Labour can still exhibit a flash of old puritanical steel. Straw

has ordered that Myra Hindley remain in jail until she dies and the Parole Board has rejected Reggie Kray's application for parole, despite his having served 30 years inside. Poor Reggie is probably better off where he is. Not only would he feel severely marginalised in the nice new world of new Labour, he would barely recognise the Britain he last saw as a free man in 1968.

Prescott manages to steer round the green learning curve

By Nick Nuttall, Arthur Leathley and Michael Hornsby

"Choose how to protect your environment" — have Labour environmental promises been matched by action?

John Prescott thought biodiversity was a washing powder and Michael Meacher was not giving interviews. "You'd be amazed by how complex the environment is," Mr Meacher confided shyly, days into office in his new role as Minister for the Environment. Meanwhile, Gavin Strang, the Minister for Transport, looked faintly startled, like a rabbit caught in car headlights. Yet 12 months on Secretary of

State Mr Prescott waxes knowledgeable about everything from chlorofluorocarbons (which destroy the ozone layer) to the fate of the dung beetle. Mr Meacher, deemed the loose cannon, has blundered only once when a plan to fell trees at his country estate to make way for a tennis court had to be shelved. Mr Strang has been kept out of harm's way. Mr Prescott's ministerial Jaguar is gas powered and the bluebells have, along with some 30 other native species, secured legal protection. He has bruised the water industry over leaks and fat cat salaries and battered the regulator for not being tough enough.

Pledges on legislation include consultation documents and reviews ranging from bedbug protection to a review of the energy efficiency regulations in buildings. In truth, more has been achieved than might at first appear although much has been of the housekeeping rather than headline-grabbing kind. Environment, transport and the regions have been brought together and an Environmental Audit Committee has been set up to bring government to account. Baroness Young of Old Scone, former head of the RSPB, has been brought in to beef up English Nature, the government's wildlife advisers.



The roads programme has been suspended and the Salisbury bypass cancelled — the first time a road has been scrapped on environmental grounds. Gordon Brown has done some environmental taxation — road fuel tax up 6 rather than 5 per cent and a bit of help for energy saving materials. Possibly the greatest achievement was at the Kyoto summit on

global warming when Mr Prescott brokered a deal between Japan, America and Europe with a characteristic mixture of bullying and moralising. The White Paper on integrating transport policy is, naturally, running late. Every difficult, and sometimes simple, question has been answered with "the White Paper will address that". The

document will truly test the Government's "green" hue. Its goals include cutting congestion, reducing air pollution and the threat of global warming and boosting the inner cities.

On countryside issues Mr Blair disappointed many by failing to provide parliamentary time for a backbench anti-hunting Bill and by backing away from a confrontation with landowners over a public right to roam. Another of the thorniest problems will be the new homes — between 4.4 million and 5 million — which forecasts say will be needed in England by 2016. Plans for one of Labour's most ambitious projects, an indepen-

dent Food Standards Agency, were unveiled in a White Paper in January but it will not be up and running before the second half of next year. In agriculture, the proclaimed determination of Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Secretary, to cut expenditure on the common agricultural policy by reducing farmers' subsidies have yet to be tested in serious negotiation with other EU member states. And Dr Cunningham, who has been labelled "Jack Boots" for telling Britons they could no longer eat beef on the bone, has also infuriated farmers by cutting back on BSE aid, pleading Treasury restraints while spending £1 million on moving offices.

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Coe pressed to run in London mayor contest

Tories worried about Jeffrey Archer's bid believe they have just the man to beat him. Andrew Pierce reports

SEBASTIAN COE is being urged to join the contest to become Tory candidate for the London mayoral election.

Senior Tories want the athlete-turned-politician to put his name forward as concern increases over Jeffrey Archer's candidacy. Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare withdrew at short notice from last night's *Evening Standard* debate on the future of the capital. The newspaper has decided to oppose an Archer candidacy.

Lord Archer's withdrawal, on the ground that he had been unable to cancel a charity engagement, was surprising. The other contenders, Glenda Jackson, Ken Livingstone and Steven Norris, all took part in the televised debate, as did Richard Brunson, a popular choice to become mayor but who has no plans to stand. Lord Archer declined to name

the charity he was supporting. The prospect of Mr Coe, who lost his seat in the Commons last year, stepping forward would throw open the Tory contest, which has been dominated by Lord Archer and Mr Norris, a former Transport Minister.

A Coe candidacy was being openly discussed yesterday by Tories close to William Hague, the party leader. Mr Hague regards the former athlete, who is his chief of staff, as his most trusted aide. Although Mr Coe has been reluctant to stand he is coming under pressure to reconsider by friends linked to Mr Hague. They argue that Mr Coe, a double Olympic gold medalist, could be decisive in securing the Games.

In a speech to the *Evening Standard* forum, Tony Blair underlined the significance of the mayoralty to a future



Coe supporters say he has right image

Olympics bid. He said: "The elected mayor of London will be an important national and international figure. Let us imagine that London will one day bid for the Olympic Games. As England's efforts to host the World Cup are showing, landing such an event requires drive, energy, ambition and the ability to lead and inspire. I see an absolutely central role for the mayor in such a venture." Last night a senior Tory said: "Seb Coe represents that modern image. He is close to

Hague. He is associated with the reforms. He is well known in London and would be an asset for the city because his appeal transcends party political boundaries."

Mr Coe lost his Cornwall seat at the general election on a swing of 5 per cent, way below the national average. The loss was attributed to the 3,500 votes cast for the Referendum Party.

Lord Archer, according to the latest polls, is far ahead in the battle to be Tory candidate. But his opponents fear that if he is chosen the *Evening Standard* will endorse the Labour candidate.

Yesterday Lord Archer insisted that there was nothing untoward about his withdrawal from the debate. "I had a prior commitment to preside over a charity auction. I had hoped to be able to withdraw but the organisers rang me late in the day to say they hoped I would still attend. I didn't want to let them down."

The Tories confirmed yesterday that their candidate would be chosen in a one member, one vote ballot of the 57,000 London members.



William Hague turned to Sir Jimmy Savile for a spot of sartorial advice yesterday when they were honoured as Top Tie Wearers by the Guild of British Tie Makers

Watchdog condemns change in libel law

By Nicholas Watt

JOHN MAJOR was wrong to allow changes to the 300-year-old Bill of Rights in 1996 that cleared the way for a libel action by Neil Hamilton. Parliament's standards watchdog said yesterday.

The constitutional change has freed MPs to take libel actions, but prevents outsiders from suing MPs over defamatory remarks made in the Commons. Sir Gordon told the Parliamentary Privilege Committee that it had benefited MPs at the expense of outsiders. "My experience suggests that the present position is illogical and unsatisfactory."

At the height of the cash-for-questions affair in 1996, Mr Major gave his tacit support to an amendment to the 1689 Bill of Rights. A clause prevented the statements of an MP in Parliament from being used as evidence in court. After the change, Mr Hamilton abandoned his libel action against *The Guardian*, which alleged that he had been paid to ask questions in the Commons.

Blair may find his hand forced on EMU timing

TONY BLAIR wants to play monetary union long. He has a clear view about what government policy should be at the next election. But he does not want to declare his hand too soon. At present, his approach is of studied opaqueness. He is favourable in principle, and sees no constitutional barriers to entry, but he wants to see whether EMU is successfully launched and works reasonably smoothly over the next few years.

Given the perhaps inevitable decision not to enter from the start next January, Mr Blair's caution now is less to do with the current divergence of interest rates between Britain and Germany than with the desire to avoid a premature political dispute. Despite obvious uncertainties over EMU, his private strategy is based on the assumption that the euro will succeed, and that his Government is likely to recommend entry early in the next Parliament.

It is all a question of timing. Mr Blair believes that Labour needs to establish itself in government after so long in opposition, to prove that it is competent in managing the economy. On this view, the last thing that the Government needs now is a bitter argument over monetary union when a referendum is likely to be at least three years away. So he is pursuing a policy of gradualism, hoping to win round public opinion in support of entry.

Mr Blair also does not want unnecessarily to antagonise some of his new-found media allies. Peter Mandelson has said he believes that Rupert Murdoch is persuadable since he is a pragmatist, though the editor of *The Sun* has protested against any government pressure to shift. At any rate, Mr Blair's advisers may hope to retain *The Sun's* overall support at the next election, despite the paper's hostility to a single currency, by promising that the public will have a separate vote at a referendum shortly afterwards.

However, the Government's cautious gradualism may not be sustainable. That is the real message of yesterday's report from the Treasury Committee on EMU. Canny leaking over

the weekend by sceptic members of the committee has given the impression that the main conclusion was that it will be impossible to reach a judgment either on the success of EMU or on Gordon Brown's five tests on British entry "for at least five years". That sentence was eagerly seized upon by Peter Lilley and the Tories to back their policy of opposing entry to the euro at the next election.

The majority of the committee is sympathetic to EMU but was outmanoeuvred in this initial propaganda battle. The substance of the report is not sceptic — and amounts to a detailed critique of the Government's obfuscations over conditions for entry and preparations. The committee discusses the various risks of remaining outside EMU and urges the Treasury to be more explicit about Mr Brown's tests. The Government, on the MPs' view, needs to do more now to prepare business and the public for the euro both

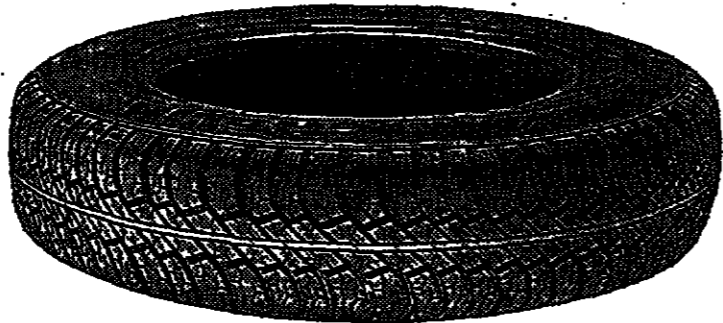
RIDDELL ON POLITICS

from next January while sterling is outside and ahead of possible entry in a few years. Mr Brown yesterday again emphasised the Government's proposals and consultations with business to aid preparations, but the committee argues that this work needs to be stepped up via the publication of a national changeover plan.

The report in effect challenges the Government's caution and desire to avoid a clear-cut position now. The MPs say the euro might anyway become widely used in Britain, as some big companies have already indicated, and this would add to pressure for formal entry. Many businesses have said they will not invest the large sums needed to prepare unless the Government is more open about its approach and starts spending money to prepare the public sector. Mr Blair may be forced by events to commit himself earlier than he would now like.

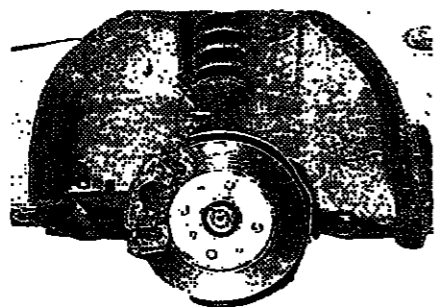
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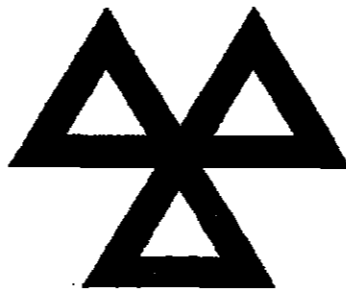


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Netanyahu defies pullout call

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

HOURS after meeting President Mubarak of Egypt for the first time in a year, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, told a news conference in Jerusalem yesterday that next week's London peace talks would fail unless the Palestinians were prepared to show flexibility.

Israeli officials said it was clear that Mr Netanyahu was signalling that there was no chance of Israel agreeing to the further 13 per cent troop withdrawal from the West Bank being demanded by the US. The Palestine Liberation Organisation has stated categorically that it will not accept less.

This divergence underlined the scope of the diplomatic task faced in London by Tony Blair and Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State. In the most outspoken language that he has used in public in the intense round of diplomatic bargaining leading up to the May 4 talks, Mr Netanyahu said: "If we are going to have peace, as we want, both the Israeli side and the Palestinians will have to make concessions. If I don't capitulate to these demands, will I be branded an obstacle to peace? Let me save you the suspense. Of course, of course, they will all point the finger, so what?"

"I will do what I think is important to achieve a secure peace, a just peace, for Israel. Nothing will make me change."

Earlier, a senior State Department official gave a warning of the dangers of failure in London. Speaking in Cairo after meeting Mr Mubarak, Marwan Indyk, former US Ambassador in Tel Aviv, said: "What is very important is that both sides come to that meeting with a view to making it a success. We are concerned about the consequences if we do not now achieve a breakthrough and put the process back on track."

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have been in limbo since March 1997, when Israel started building a new settlement at Har Homa in an annexed east Jerusalem. The stalemate was made worse by a series of Islamic suicide bombs in Israel. Israel Radio last night quoted a senior Israeli diplomatic source as accusing the US — represented in Israel by Dennis Ross, the special envoy — of putting pressure on Israel to compromise in advance of the London talks.

The Israeli Government has repeatedly insisted that its security needs prohibit more than 9 per cent of the remaining occupied West Bank land being handed to the PLO at this stage.

"They say I am responsible already," Mr Netanyahu told reporters before the start of 24 hours of solemn ceremonies throughout Israel to mark the dead fallen in the five wars since its creation 50 years ago tomorrow.

"They say that because Israel has the gall, the temerity, to insist that it will decide on its own security, that it will decide what terrain is crucial for its defence, that this is an unacceptable assault on peace. Well, I can tell you, we are going to insist exactly that."

"We have a letter signed by [the former] US Secretary of State Warren Christopher that Israel, and Israel alone, will make the determinations of re-deployment [in the West Bank] based on its security needs. We have stretched ourselves to the limit, beyond our limit. We are willing to be flexible in areas that are difficult for us."

"But it cannot be that Israel is expected to do things which will sacrifice and endanger its security. It cannot be that Israel is the only one expected to make compromises, and the other side is supposed to sit pretty and wait for those concessions to come forth."

Uri Savir, the former chief Israeli peace negotiator, has disclosed in a new book that Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Prime Minister, was prepared to give back only 50 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians, in three stages, while the final settlement was being negotiated. The book said that this was the maximum that Mr Rabin regarded as feasible for transfer to maintain Israel's security.

As the Palestinians already control about 30 per cent, his total bargaining figure compares with 43 per cent suggested in the US blueprint, and 39 per cent by Israel.

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An Israeli soldier visits the military cemetery in Tel Aviv as the nation mourns the war dead of 50 years

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Captive claims Kurds killed Palme

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

THE border between Turkey and Iraq may provide clues to the unsolved assassination of Olaf Palme, the Swedish Prime Minister shot in 1986 after leaving a Stockholm cinema.

Turkey yesterday passed to the Swedish Embassy in Ankara the results of its interrogation of Semdin Sakik, the field commander of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) abducted from northern Iraq by Turkish troops just over two weeks ago.

Since then Mr Sakik has commanded headlines with revelations about the rebel organisation. Now he has said that the PKK ordered the assassination in revenge for the imprisonment of one of its members for killing a fellow Kurd.

Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK's leader, was angered when the Swedish Government branded it a "terrorist organisation". Separately Mehmet Ali Birand, a respected columnist for *Sabah*, said the newspaper had dismissed him after Mr Sakik named him as a PKK sympathiser. Mr Birand called the allegations ridiculous.

Earlier, a senior State Department official gave a warning of the dangers of failure in London. Speaking in Cairo after meeting Mr Mubarak, Marwan Indyk, former US Ambassador in Tel Aviv, said: "What is very important is that both sides come to that meeting with a view to making it a success. We are concerned about the consequences if we do not now achieve a breakthrough and put the process back on track."

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Adam Montefiore: making wine in dangerous places

Briton in Golan harvests success of kosher wines

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

OF THE 40,000 immigrants from Britain since the foundation of Israel, few can boast such illustrious antecedents or as exotic a new career as Adam Montefiore, now charged with giving Israel's budding wine industry international credibility.

Scion of one of the most famous Anglo-Jewish families of the 19th century, whose patriarch, Sir Moses Montefiore, organised the building of the first Jewish settlement outside Jerusalem's Old City walls, he claims to be the first family member to live in the Holy Land.

Three times a week, either in a small plane or by car, he makes his way from Raananna, the town on the coastal plain where he has lived with his wife, Jill, and two of their three children since 1989, to the winery in Katzin, the capital of the Golan Heights, the strategic plateau captured from Syria in 1967.

Using expertise garnered when he was chief wine buyer for Bass, Mr Montefiore, 40, is fighting to shake off the traditional image of kosher wine as undrinkable and replace it with that of an improving regional wine.

"Kosher wine is a dirty word as far as we are concerned," he said. "We fulfil the basic requirements, that the grapes, once turned into juice, are not touched by anyone who is not an Orthodox, Sabbath-observant Jew. But our roots are more in the Californian wine industry. We have to prove ourselves to be something new: Jews reviving our local wine-making after a gap of 2,000 years." His Yarden label has made inroads recently in New York. Lufthansa

is the first airline to serve it. The book said that this was the maximum that Mr Rabin regarded as feasible for transfer to maintain Israel's security. As the Palestinians already control about 30 per cent, his total bargaining figure compares with 43 per cent suggested in the US blueprint, and 39 per cent by Israel.

ISRAEL AT 50

A dedicated supporter of the peace process and a reform Jew, he has been fighting the Orthodox in Raananna for seven years for permission to build a synagogue. Mr Montefiore says of the location of his business — in occupied territory whose future return to Syria many see as the key to any Middle East peace settlement: "The Golan is different from the West Bank. The Jews living and working here are mainly pioneers in the old Zionist sense of the word," he added as we tasted a batch of recent vintages produced from 11 vineyards.

One of the vineyards is at El-Ram overlooking the Syrian border on the site of a huge tank battle. Scores of twisted wrecks had to be cleared before vines were planted.

Mr Montefiore, whose fruity English tones are more redolent of an afternoon's cricket than of the rugged surroundings of the Golan, where 17,000 Jews live amid thousands of Israeli troops and under the roar of warplanes en route to Lebanon, said that the world showed no political correctness when considering his product.

"We have no Palestinians up here," he said. "People think of the Golan differently from other areas occupied by Israel in 1967. Jews were in Katzin over 2,000 years ago; it only became Syrian in 1944. We feel very confident about our future and have made no detailed plans for the possible

Science gives early ancestors a voice

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

THE distant ancestors of modern man, and even the Neanderthals, were capable of speech as long as 400,000 years ago, about 360,000 years earlier than previously had been believed, a team of American scientists has suggested.

In a paper published yesterday in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, researchers from Duke University swept aside received wisdom and said that very early members of the *Homo* type had "humanlike speech capabilities".

That daring conclusion comes from a study of the hypoglossal canal — a perforation at the bottom of the skull where the spinal cord links to the brain — in skeletons of Neanderthals and other *Homo* species which lived in Africa 400,000 years ago.

The team, led by Richard Kay and Matt Carmill, focused on the canal because it houses the nerves through which the brain controls the tongue. Previous research into the question of whether early man could speak had focused almost exclusively on the braincases of ancient skulls and the muscle attachment points near the throat. Neither was fruitful, and archaeologists have tended to agree that the earliest indisputable evi-



Neanderthal woman: capable of "speech sounds", say scientist

dence for human speech lies in the cave art that started appearing 40,000 years ago. The argument was that if they could draw, they must have possessed the creativity usually associated with an ability to communicate.

The Duke University researchers, however, have found that the hypoglossal canals in 400,000-year-old skeletons are comparable in size to those of modern man. The Neanderthals, too, who first appeared 300,000 years ago, had a canal of the same size. This means, they argue, that these species must have had a complement of nerves leading to the

tongue that matched that of modern man and thus were able to form "speech sounds". In contrast, the Australopithecines of about a million years ago had hypoglossal canals almost identical to those in chimpanzees, suggesting that they were incapable of speech.

The report states that if this interpretation is correct, "then humanlike speech capabilities may have evolved much earlier than has been inferred from the archaeological evidence for the antiquity of symbolic thought".

This thesis is but the latest to come to the rescue of Neanderthal man, previously regarded as a skulking, brutish creature who did nothing more than clobber hairy animals over the head. In 1996, Spanish scientists working near Barcelona found a series of furnaces and wooden tools that date back to Neanderthal times.

Dr Cartrill told *The New York Times*: "This is evidence for the proposition that Neanderthals could talk. Did they sound like modern humans? I don't know."

His statement was welcomed by Erik Trinkaus, an anthropologist at Washington University in St Louis and a leader in Neanderthal studies. He said: "It is not only a reasonable conclusion, but one long overdue."



Father Sava, a voice of reason distrusted by the Serb hierarchy

Marooned Serb monk calls for Kosovo ceasefire

FROM TOM WALKER AT VISOKI DECANI

THE Prior of Serbia's most famous monastery, marooned in the battleground of western Kosovo, has appealed for a ceasefire and given a warning that Belgrade's rejection of international involvement is leading down a blind alley.

Father Sava Janjic, Orthodox Prior of Visoki Decani, is a voice of reason urging both Serbs and Albanians to take advantage of the 14th-century monastery's serenity. Until a few weeks ago, Albanian families were still bringing their sick and ailing to his gates. Yesterday only a few soldiers were within Decani's grounds, resting rifles by the fountain.

Father Sava admitted he felt safer with the Yugoslav Army in the region, and its young conscripts are welcome to use his phone and e-mail. Police stay outside, keeping watch over Decani's approach road, a potential smuggling route for Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) fighters bringing weapons from Albania.

The Orthodox priest's moderate tones have brought him into conflict with the Serbian

hierarchy before, and both Serbia's President Milosevic and President Milosevic of Yugoslavia have refused to meet monastery delegations.

Instead Father Sava is one of the few Serbs to have the confidence of Pristina's political elite. Yesterday he appealed to the Albanians for more information about eight Serbs rumoured to have been kidnapped or killed by the UCK inside the triangle of territory it controls five miles southeast of the monastery.

London: America, Britain and other Nato countries are to launch a military exercise in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia involving several thousand troops — one of a number of measures to warn Belgrade against further violent repression in Kosovo (Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent, writes).

Yesterday Yevgeni Primakov, the acting Russian Foreign Minister, called for the border between Albania and Kosovo to be sealed to prevent "terrorist bands" entering the Yugoslav province.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Yeltsin picks two Cabinet seniors

Moscow: President Yeltsin named Boris Nemtsov, the liberal former First Deputy Prime Minister, and Viktor Khristenko, the Deputy Finance Minister, as Deputy Prime Ministers in a new Government yesterday, Russian news agencies said. A Kremlin spokesman could not immediately confirm the reports, which all quoted Kremlin spokesmen. Mr Nemtsov and the technocrat Mr Khristenko would be the most senior figures in the Cabinet of Sergei Kiriyenko, the new Prime Minister.

In a sign of stability following the dramatic sacking of Viktor Chernomyrdin, Mr Kiriyenko's predecessor, on March 23, a number of other key ministers, including Mikhail Zadornov, the liberal Finance Minister and Mr Khristenko's former boss, stayed on. (Reuters)

40 villagers have throats cut

Paris: Forty people were killed in an overnight massacre in a village south of Algiers, security forces claimed. The victims, from Chouardia hamlet in Medea province, 45 miles south of Algiers, all had their throats cut. The statement, read out on state-run radio, did not say who was responsible for the killings, the latest in a series of massacres this year in Algeria in which more than 1,400 people have been murdered, most of them poor villagers. (Reuters)

Croatia demands extradition

Croatia has requested the extradition of Dinko Sakic, an alleged Second World War criminal who appeared on Argentine television admitting he had been head of the Jasenovac concentration camp in former Yugoslavia, where 500,000 people were killed (Gabriella Garnini writes). The 71-year-old Croat was found last month by a television crew in the resort of Santa Teresita. The Argentine Foreign Ministry said it would agree to extradition, but Mr Sakic is thought to be in hiding.

Vanunu requests transfer

Jerusalem: Mordechai Vanunu, the convicted Israeli nuclear spy, seen right in court this week, has asked to be transferred to a prison wing for Arabs convicted of security offences against Israel, a government lawyer said yesterday. Vanunu, serving an 18-year term for passing Israel's atomic secrets to *The Sunday Times* newspaper in 1986, attended a hearing in the city of Beersheba, where he petitioned the court to allow two British lawyers to visit him. (Reuters)



Greek clergy elect reformer

Athens: Greece's top Orthodox clerics elected a forward-thinking prelate to lead the Church at a time of internal turmoil and shrinking congregations. The new archbishop, Metropolitan Christodoulos, may also help to heal the rifts with the Roman Catholic Church and other Orthodox faiths opened by his mercurial predecessor, Archbishop Seraphim, who died on April 9 aged 84. Metropolitan Christodoulos received 49 votes from the 76 senior clergy. (AP)

Tourist killed by shark

Johannesburg: A shark attacked and killed a South African tourist in Mozambique as she tried to tow a rubber dinghy to shore. Wilma von Molendoff and her fiancé, Johan Preller, were in the water towing the boat after the motor cut out when a 9ft shark bit her chest and stomach and severed her left arm. Mr Preller punched the shark on the snout to chase it away. She died in the dinghy near Bilene, on a remote part of the coast 110 miles north of the capital Maputo. (Reuters)

Teamsters challenge by son



Washington: Government investigators have cleared James Hoffa, left, to run for his infamous father's old job as president of the Teamsters, the most powerful trade union in America (Bronwen Maddox writes). Mr Hoffa, who blames an opponent's money-laundering operation for his defeat in 1996, is the front-runner in the race. Jimmy Hoffa Sr disappeared in 1975. His body was never found and he was presumed to have been murdered by the Mafia.

One of San Diego quads dies

San Diego: Baby D, the smallest of four babies born to a 55-year-old woman on April 18, has died after being taken off a life-support machines, it was reported. The quadruplets were born almost three months prematurely to a single woman through the help of fertility treatments. A girl who weighed only 10.5oz died after doctors told the mother there was no chance that the baby could survive on her own. (AP)

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Blacks to get role in Afrikaners' history

Racial mix Bill threat to white managers

SOME of Afrikanerdom's most sacred sites, including the Blood River monument which commemorates the Boer victory over the Zulu king, Dingane, 10 years ago, are to be given a facelift to show the role of black people in South African history.

President Mandela's Cabinet is likely to back proposals which will create outrage among right-wing Afrikaners who have become obsessed with the "erosion" of their cultural identity since the election of the African National Congress four years ago.

Among the sites slated for change is the Blood River Monument. Deigned by Coet Steynberg, it was erected on the site of a battle so one-sided, due to the Boers' superiority in firepower, that the river was said to have run red for three days after Dingane's impi's regiments were cut down by rifle fire and muskets in 1838. Official histories put the number of Zulu dead at 3,000, against three Boer wounded. The name of the river was changed from the Ncome to the Blood.

The ANC has a blueprint for rewriting the past, reports Sam Kiley

nant holiday, at which Afrikaners paid respects to their ancestors at the Voortrekker Monument on the outskirts of Pretoria.

Already Afrikaners believe their sacred myths have been eroded. After 1994, the Day of Reconciliation, but Afrikaners remain free to mark the "covenant" - the vow taken by the Boers before the battle.

The Blood River battle site includes a full-scale granite replica of an ox wagon, portraying its role as a mobile home, church and fort. Members of the Government said yesterday that additions to the site were likely to focus on the suffering of Zulu families after the "massacre", and an objective analysis of the subsequent settlement of Natal by whites.

The proposals are contained in an internal ANC memorandum on the future of culturally sensitive monuments, sites and names. It indicates that the Cabinet will not be considering proposals to demolish monuments which black people might find offensive. Nor is there to be any compulsory scrapping of racially objectionable names - for example, rivers and the many other geographical features in which the word "kafir" appears.

One other area of change is likely to be at Boer War memorials, in particular those to concentration camp victims. Tens of thousands of blacks died in the war and in the camps, set up by the British for civilians to cut the Boer kommandos from their means of support. But the places treated by Afrikaners as pilgrimage sites make no mention of the black victims.

The South African Government intends to turn memorials to concentration camp victims into genuine historical venues, rather than rallying points for Afrikaner nationalism, by "widening their appeal".

Mr Mandela is also planning to honour famous figures in the black liberation struggle whose names were banned from press reports for years under the National Party.



Zulu warriors attacking wagons drawn up in laager. Monuments at historical sites are to be given a facelift

Albert Luthuli, the Nobel peace laureate, is likely to be honoured with a statue in his home town of Kwa Dukuza, recently renamed from Stanger, in KwaZulu/Natal.

There are also plans to build a museum to house Mr Mandela's memorabilia at his home village in Transkei, and a memorial to Samora Machel, the late Mozambican

President, who died in a mysterious plane crash in South Africa. Most ambitious of all is a "Freedom Park", possibly modelled on Washington's

Mall, where gardens, memorials and galleries would link administrative and political offices if Cape Town fails to retain its role as the seat of the parliament.

Johannesburg: White workers who rose through the public sector into managerial posts reserved for them under apartheid have had their jobs threatened by positive discrimination legislation proposed yesterday by the South African Government (Sam Kiley writes).

The legislation would demand support for positive discrimination from the public sector, which employs 11.5 million people. The policy comes in the wake of an Employment Equity Bill, which will force the private sector into changing the composition of its work force to reflect society: 70 per cent black, 50 per cent female, and 2 per cent disabled.

The private sector Bill, expected to be passed in June, has been criticised because it punishes companies that fail to transform, rather than incentives for those that do. The public sector legislation is likely to meet the same criticism.

In January, whites outnumbered blacks in public sector management by two to one.

Ex-deputy of Abacha one of plotters to die

BY SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

OLADIPO DIYA, the former junta deputy General Sani Abacha, was yesterday sentenced to death along with five others for plotting to overthrow the Nigerian military regime which they helped to install.

Lieutenant General Diya, was sentenced to be shot by firing squad after the tribunal found that he was guilty of treason. He has persistently claimed that he was framed.

Videotapes and audio recordings held by the Nigerian authorities show General Diya begging his former boss for his life after he was allegedly trapped into agreeing to overthrow the Abacha regime by the Nigerian leader's own agents.

"This whole thing is a set-up," General Diya told the court during the case against him opened.

General Diya, isolated from his former allies in the north of the country after a prominent former general died in detention earlier this year, his reformed to increasingly pirated schemes to remain in power in the face of overwhelming civilian opposition.

He has used the philosophy of "containment" to ensure that popular military leaders, such as General Victor Malu

- the magistrate in the Diya case - are closely associated with his regime.

General Malu won international plaudits for his role in restoring peace to Liberia, where his Ecomog peacekeeping force oversaw elections and successfully kept warring factions apart long enough for a form of democracy to take hold after seven years of war.

But he was ordered to preside over the Diya case, held in Jos, where his verdict could only be "guilty" if he wanted to avoid being fingered by General Abacha as a traitor himself.

The Nigerian political scene under General Abacha has recently veered between the absurd and the ridiculous. He has been nominated as the only candidate in presidential elections set for August 1. But the nominations come from the only five parties that he has allowed to take part in Nigerian politics. All five parties depend on his regime for their funding.

The absence of even a token opposition candidate has prompted some members of his Government to propose a referendum on his leadership. But this presents the military regime with the danger that General Abacha could face a "No" vote, or a massive civilian boycott which would humiliate the general rather than endorse his democratic credentials.

The announcement of the coup trial verdict comes after the weekend's national assembly elections, dogged by a low turnout, in which results released so far show the United Nigerian Congress Party ahead of four others.

The party was the first of the five registered political groupings to press General Abacha to stand for President.

Opponents and pro-democracy groups have dismissed General Abacha's plans to restore civilian rule this year as a farce and Nigeria's main opposition group, the United Action for Democracy, has called for nationwide May Day protests as part of a campaign against the Abacha Government.



Diya: "I was set up" he told the tribunal

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Spanish wetlands face water shortage after dams block toxic river

FROM GILES TREMLETT
IN MADRID

THE Coto de Doñana national park in southwest Spain faces an indefinite enforced water shortage as the chaotic response to a spillage of toxic mine waste threatens to aggravate damage to West Europe's biggest nature reserve.

Senior park officers yesterday countered claims by Isabel Tocino, the Environment Minister, that the toxic waste had not reached the

centre of the wetland park where a quarter of a million birds are nesting. They said they believed at least one underground aquifer was carrying poisonous heavy metals into the wetlands.

In the meantime the Los Frailes mine at Aznalcollar, where the toxic waste reservoir burst its banks on Saturday, continued to pump more poisonous water into the River Guadamar. None of the myriad public bodies responsible for the park would accept responsibility for the decision to pump water from the mine reservoir so that the 150ft breach in its wall could be filled.

Experts continued to say that a sudden downpour of rain could still carry the thick black sludge that covered much of the valley of the River Guadamar into the wetlands.

No attempt has been made to start removing the toxic sludge that covers about 10,000 acres of the river valley. Experts said that the

light rain falling over the area yesterday would help to carry the poison into the aquifers.

Alberto Ruiz de Larramendi, the park's director, said the delicate wetlands could no longer be allowed to accept water from the River Guadamar which is normally the park's main source of rain-water and that would have serious consequences.

Five dams have been built around the wetlands to keep out the poisoned waters of the Guadamar,

now polluted with heavy metals such as mercury, lead and zinc. Señor Ruiz de Larramendi said the park would certainly not be able to receive the autumn rainfall which normally flows into Doñana from the Guadamar. He said it was impossible to say how long it would be before the Guadamar could once again water the wetlands, which should be covered by water for six months of the year.

The park has only just recovered from a five-year natural drought

that severely reduced the wildlife population.

The flood of toxic water finally made its way yesterday through the canals into which it had been diverted and into the mouth of the fast-flowing River Guadalquivir, which was carrying it out to sea.

Fishermen at the mouth of the Guadalquivir were pulling in their nets yesterday for what some assumed would be the last time for many years. Farmers' organisations said that the land poisoned

by the toxic flood would have to be left fallow for up to 25 years.

The Spanish Attorney-General's office said yesterday it had opened investigations into the Swedish-Canadian Boliden mining company, which owns Los Frailes, and the Industry Department of the Andalucía regional government.

Industry Department inspectors had visited the dam on Friday, hours before it broke and released 5 million cubic metres of poisonous water into the Guadamar.

Belgian coalition survives vote as police chief quits

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

THE chief of Belgium's national police resigned yesterday over the brief escape of Marc Dutroux, the alleged child murderer, as the Government of Jean-Luc Dehaene survived a parliamentary vote of confidence, defusing the latest crisis in the country's chronic political malaise.

General Willy Deridder, commander of the gendarmerie since 1992, bowed reluctantly to pressure for more heads to roll after two officers allowed Dutroux to run from a provincial courthouse last Thursday.

The Justice and Interior Ministers both resigned that day, before Dutroux was recaptured three hours after his break-out. The resignations have helped to defuse a new explosion of public anger towards Mr Dehaene's centre-left coalition Government.

General Deridder, 56, is the first police official to lose his job over the paedophile case, which erupted in 1996 and came to symbolise the paralysis of Belgium's multilayered federal system, with its warring linguistic communities, lack of accountability and record of corruption.

The gendarmerie, now being merged with the locally based civilian police, was blamed by a parliamentary inquiry for bungling the investigation which belatedly led to the arrest of Dutroux on charges of killing four girls and kidnapping others.

Belgians have been amazed by the laxness of security arrangements around Dutroux. It has emerged, for example, that lacking an available van a pair of gendarme officers would sometimes use an ordinary taxi to transport Dutroux from his prison to the courthouse, 30 miles away, to consult the prosecutor's files against him.

In parliament, Mr Dehaene was subjected to a torrent of scorn from the conservative opposition parties as he proclaimed his determination to stay in power until its term ends in June 1999. The support of his four-party coalition was enough to defeat by 81 to 64 votes the Opposition's attempt to unseat the Prime Minister.

Mr Dehaene promised to speed reforms to the police and judiciary, set in motion during the virtual national revolt in 1996, and called on other high officials to take responsibility for mishandling the Dutroux case.

Managing Belgium's imminent entry to European monetary union remained his top priority, along with the judicial reforms, he said. The Government aims to follow up yesterday's victory with a formal vote of confidence tomorrow, two days before it is due to take Belgium into monetary union at a European Union summit.

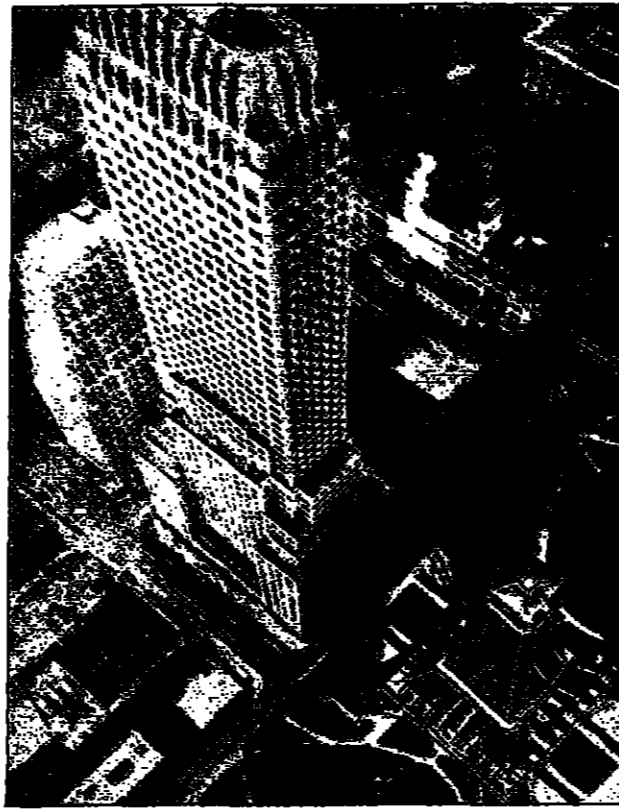
As a few hundred protesters demonstrated near the parliament, the Prime Minister said the Dutroux escape was a case of "the unimaginable happening". He understood the public outrage and the suffering of the families of the victims, he said.

In words only too familiar to weary Belgians, he promised to "re-establish the confidence of the people" and achieve the "mental shift needed to rebuild the credibility of our institutions".

The tension between the country's two feuding language blocs was aired when MPs of the extreme right-wing Vlaams Blok demanded the dismissal of Walloon, or French-speaking, officials. Both ministers who resigned and General Deridder are Dutch-speaking Flemings.



Deridder: first officer to go in Dutroux case



Artists foresaw an Eiffel Tower dwarfed by offices

Paris celebrates visions of the future by artists of the past

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

SKYSCRAPERS dwarfing the Eiffel Tower, the Place de la Concorde transformed into a vast wheatfield and, on top of the Arc de Triomphe, a landing pad for sky-taxis: these are just some of the visions of Paris in 2000 as imagined by French architects, designers and artists

over the past 150 years. While the millennium approaches, the Paris city authorities have collected these futuristic ideas for an exhibition called *The Year 2000, Utopian Paris*, which opens today at the Hôtel de Ville.

The exhibition, including designs, illustrations, films, models and cartoons, shows that French designers and thinkers have long been obsessed with the millennium, their visions ranging from the fantastic to the impractical to the present.

Among the notions that failed to get off the ground was Le Corbusier's 1925 plan (thankfully rejected by the city authorities) to flatten the ancient Marais district and turn it into a mini-Manhattan, with identical 200ft skyscrapers built on a grid. Hector



Albert Robida's 1886 view of a future Paris included comprehensive transport

Horeau, on the other hand, thought that the best way to preserve the Paris boulevards would be to cover them from the rain and snow.

Only marginally more practical was the late 19th-century notion that Paris in 2000 should become a commercial port like London, with all the bridges turned into draw-bridges to make the Seine accessible to large ships all the way to Notre Dame. Other bizarre projects imagined turning the Opéra into an enormous airport, transforming Les Halles into a lake and building an entire underground city, complete with gardens and restaurants.

"This was a time of modernism," as the newspaper *Journal du Dimanche* observed. "The Eiffel Tower had just been built. Anything was possible."

In the 1890s the artist Albert Robida imagined a Paris in which the sky was packed with ladies and gentlemen cruising up and down the Avenue de l'Opéra in their flying machines, while others predicted an entire system of metropolitan air traffic, with refuelling stations on the city's principal monuments.

The exhibition is divided into three sections: visions of the future, fantasies and future life. It also vividly recalls earlier battles over proposed changes to the city and illustrates, as one newspaper headline observed, "the mad projects you have avoided".

Some early visions of the millennium are apocalyptic, with Paris engulfed by a tidal wave or, in a film from the 1920s, an image of the Eiffel

Tower itself destroyed by a mad inventor.

While many of the more fantastic predictions and projects never came to pass, others were uncannily prophetic. Robida, for example, imagined in 1884 that Parisians might one day communicate by "téléphone", which transmitted not only the sound of a person's voice but their image as well. The artist also suggested a prototype for the television, warning that one day it might witness war live on vast flat screens pinned to walls, in an early version of CNN.

One of Robida's drawings shows a woman reclining on her balcony, with an unrecognisable Paris below her, listening to petrified what is surely the earliest vision of a portable tere.

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National Provident Institution Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 162nd Annual General Meeting of Members of National Provident Institution will be held at the City Conference Centre, 76 Mark Lane, London EC3R 7JN, on Thursday, 28 May 1998 at 12.00 noon, for the transaction of the following ordinary business:

- Resolution No. 1 To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 1997;
- Resolution No. 2 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr P L Macdougall, who has joined the Board since the last Annual General Meeting;
- Resolution No. 3 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr L M Edmans, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 4 To re-appoint as a Director, Baroness Hogg, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 5 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr J D Carter, who is retiring by rotation;
- Resolution No. 6 To re-appoint as a Director, Mr A C Barker, who is retiring by rotation; (Mr Macdougall, Baroness Hogg, Mr Carter and Mr Barker are members of the Remuneration Committee)
- Resolution No. 7 To re-appoint Coopers & Lybrand as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to determine their remuneration.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD: Steven O'Brien, Company Secretary.
Principal Office: National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2UE.

NOTE: A member entitled to attend and vote at the general meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, to vote instead of him or her. A proxy need not be a member of NPI. Proxy forms are available on request from the Company Secretary at the Principal Office. Completed proxy forms must be deposited at the Principal Office not later than 12 noon on 26 May 1998.



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US and Norway 'used insane for Nazi-style tests'

FROM ANDREW GLASSE IN OSLO

AMERICAN and Norwegian hospitals were involved in sterilisation experiments on the mentally retarded using radiation over a 20-year period up to 1994.

Although most of the work was done during the Cold War, some experiments continued until as late as four years ago, according to the Oslo daily *Dagbladet*.

With chilling echoes of the Nazi era, the Americans and Norwegians were intent upon assessing the effects of radiation on different parts of the body and apparently had no qualms about the use of subjects who were "easy to deal with", according to Fredrik Mellbye, who revealed the shocking details of the project. He is a former colleague of the then director of health services.

Last night the State Department in Washington was seeking clarification of the report from its embassy in Oslo. "An unknown number of experiments were undertaken in all secrecy at many Norwegian hospitals after the war when the nuclear threat and arms race were at their worst," the Norwegian daily said.

Sweden has also admitted that 60,000 women were forcibly sterilised between 1936 and 1976.

Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Estonia and one Swiss canton as well as the Nazis all put the theory of selective breeding into practice in the 1920s and 1930s. But the Swedish revelations were particularly stunning. Grounds for sterilisation included "unmistakable Gypsy features, psychopathy and vagabond life". Other grounds were specified as "displaying undesirable racial characteristics or signs of 'inferiority', poor eyesight or sexual and social deviancy".

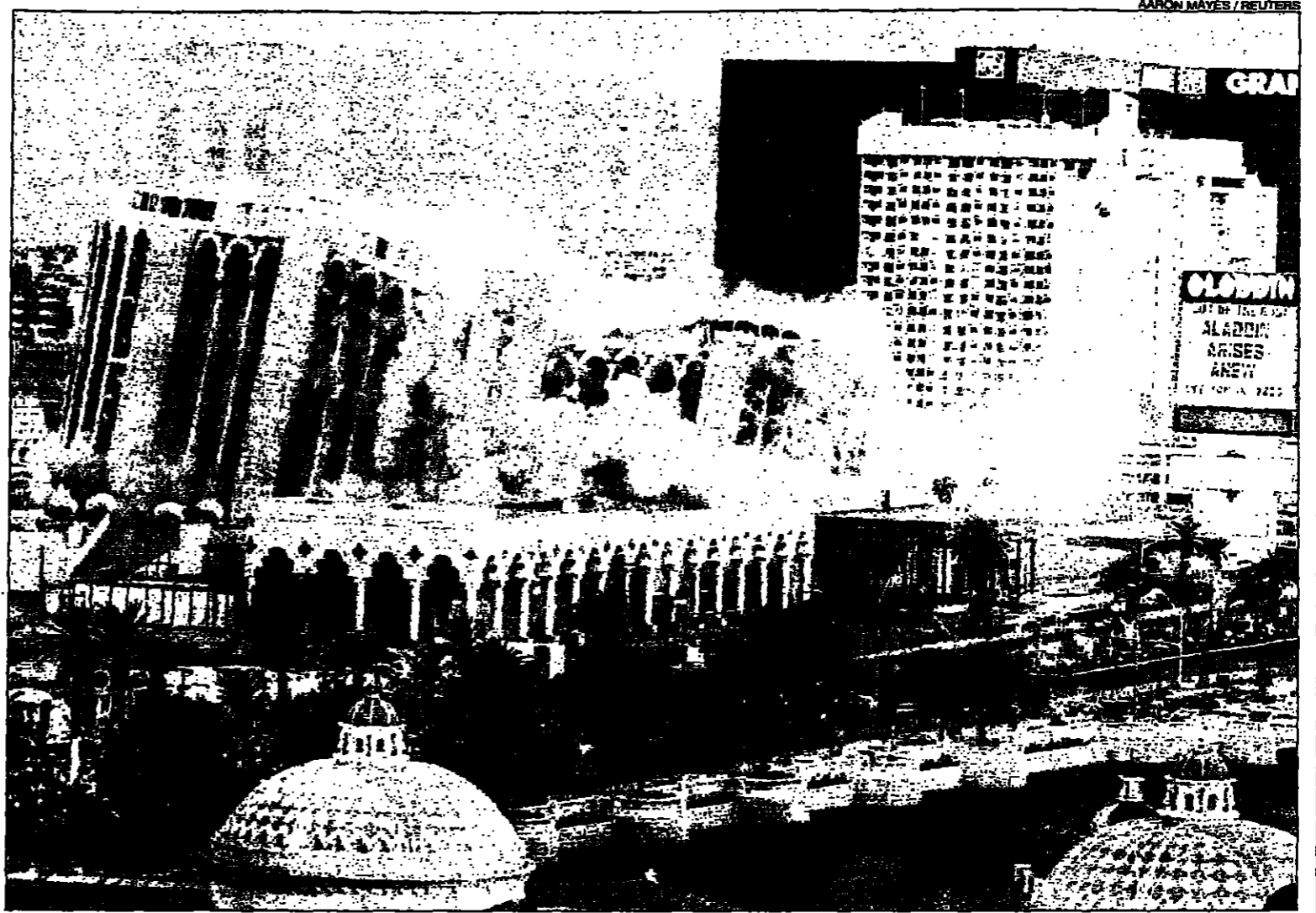
Last year the French launched an inquiry into reports that 15,000 Frenchwomen had been illegally sterilised without their consent after being declared unfit for motherhood. All were sterilised by state-run institutions.

Mr Mellbye said the Norwegian experiments were carried out with the co-operation of Americans "at the highest level" and that Norwegian doctors were encouraged to seek US financial support.

Dagbladet said public investigations in the United States have revealed that authorities there financed about 4,000 such experiments on humans between 1944 and 1994.

After Norway was liberated from Nazi occupation in 1945, it was eager for US military and economic assistance. When the Soviet Union, which shared a border with Norway, began producing nuclear weapons in 1949 the West wanted to know more about the impact nuclear fallout had on people. Mr Mellbye said the programme was an attempt to gain basic knowledge about radiation and was neither secret nor controversial.

Tore Brandsborg, leader of the National Society for Scientific Patients and their families, expressed shock and called for an inquiry.



The Aladdin Hotel collapses yesterday after demolition teams had set off explosives. It is to be replaced by a complex three times as big

Dynamite turns Elvis's heartbreak hotel to dust

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

THE hotel where Elvis Presley was married in 1967 collapsed in a huge cloud of grey dust as half a ton of dynamite consigned it to Las Vegas history.

The Aladdin, a 17-storey building closely linked to the Mafia's Las Vegas heyday, became the city's fifth flood-casino in as many years to be destroyed to make way for a new generation of "mega-resorts".

Even as the 1,100-room tower imploded under floodlights on Monday night, a giant billboard announced that it would rise again, more than three times as big.

Demolition experts ensured that the old Aladdin's giant auditorium, where Presley once performed, was untouched by the explosion. Wayne Newton bought the hotel with a partner in 1980

for \$85 million and was promptly accused by NBC of receiving the money for the purchase from the Mafia. He sued the network and was awarded \$22.5 million in damages, only to see NBC exonerated by an appeal court.

The Dunes, the landmark, the Sands and the Hacienda, all symbols of a city reputedly beyond the reach of law enforcement and controlled by the Chicago Mob, have been dynamited since 1993. In their place ten vast casinos have gone up along the Strip, bringing intense demand for labour and about 30,000 new hotel rooms to Las Vegas.

Despite suffering a critical and permanent water shortage, America's desert-stied gambling capital is now the fastest-growing city in the country.



Elvis and Priscilla Presley cut the cake at their wedding in 1967

Albright ready for tough talk on Tibet

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN BEIJING

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT, the US Secretary of State, is likely to talk tough on human rights in Tibet during two days of discussions with Chinese leaders beginning today. The talks come before the key summit in China in June between President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin of China, analysts said.

Ms Albright signalled her intention at Sophia University in Tokyo to pursue human rights vigorously, despite the release of two leading dissidents, Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan.

"On this issue, especially, we must continue to speak with clarity," she said. "The Chinese Government's repression of dissent and religious freedom has not eased."

Human rights organisations overseas say that there are about 2,000 dissidents, many of whose names are virtually unknown outside China, in prisons and labour camps.

On Tibet, Ms Albright will press for Beijing to start a dialogue with the Dalai Lama and ask for freedom for Ngawang Choephel, the Fulbright scholar and musicologist imprisoned on espionage charges, and for Tibetan nuns and monks.

Western diplomats believe, however, that Beijing is unlikely to budge on Tibet and Xu Wenli, China's leading internal human rights advocate, said that while Beijing might give some ground on dissidents, it would maintain a hard line on Tibet.

Pentagon may test DNA of Unknown Soldier

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

A SPECIAL Pentagon panel has backed reopening the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to perform the latest DNA tests on the remains of the Vietnam War veteran, in a move bound to revive painful emotions about one of the nation's most revered burial sites.

The extraordinary plan to exhume the body to identify it comes in response to pleas by the family of First Lieutenant Michael Blassie. They believe the remains could be those of the air force pilot. His A37B attack jet was shot down on May 11, 1972. The Pentagon believes the Unknown Soldier is most likely to be either Lieutenant Blassie or Captain Rodney Strobridge, a helicopter pilot shot down on the same day.

But Althea Strobridge, Captain Strobridge's mother, has said that she sees no point in reopening the tomb. "If he is there, what good is it going to do?" she told *The New York Times*. "I couldn't hug him or anything."

William Cohen, the Defence Secretary, will make a final decision within weeks about whether to disrupt permanently the national symbol of mystery, heroism and sacrifice. The body in the tomb was originally identified as that of Lieutenant Blassie. But in 1978 the Pentagon's laboratory found that the remains had an O-negative blood type, different from the officer's.

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CRIES UNHEARD: MARY BELL

The truth about Mary Bell

Gitta Sereny has followed the life of Mary Bell for 30 years. Bell has now told her what she felt, what was done by her and also to her. Starting today we serialise Sereny's remarkable study of Bell, *Cries Unheard*

I have been hoping for 18 years to write this book, in which Mary Bell, an exceptionally intelligent child at 11, released from detention in 1980 when she was 23, and now 40, speaks to us. She tells us what she did and what she felt, what was done to her and also for her, and what she became. She describes the months leading up to the two killings, her friendship with her co-accused, 13-year-old Norma Bell (to whom she was not related), and their fantasy life together which was to result in the tragic death of the two toddlers.

She recalls the voices of all the learned men at her trial who, for what seemed to her like years, spoke in incomprehensible terms, and she recreates her horrifying certainty that they would send her to the gallows. She takes us through the 12 years of her detention, the first five (from 11 to 16) in a secure unit where — for most of that time the only girl with twenty-odd boys — she had no psychiatric care, but where she found in the headmaster, a former naval officer, the first honourable adult she could respect and love.

At 16, however, regardless of her mentor's pleadings, the system which demands that juveniles upon reaching 16 must serve their punishment in prison prevailed, and she was removed from the emotional security and academic structure to which she had responded and sent to a maximum security women's prison. Battling for seven years against being institutionalised, rebelling and using sex to manipulate this environment, she lost almost everything she had gained in the previous five years, until, like most adolescents sent to adult penal institutions, she finally emerged into the conditional freedom of a "Schedule One" released prisoner on licence, as an emotionally and sexually confused 23-year-old in chaos. In the final section of the book I return to her early

childhood which, as we talked, slowly began to unravel from her mind which had blocked the confrontation with it for so long. She speaks, with excruciating difficulty, about the sexual abuse she was subjected to as a small child upon her mother's direction and in her presence; and in fits and starts over months searches her memory for the events in her life from the age of eight to the day before she turned 11, when she killed Martin Brown.

She eventually talks haltingly and despairingly about those 15 minutes on May 25 1968, at the end of which the four-year-old child was dead, and about the following nine weeks leading up to the killing of three-year-old Brian Howe. Finally she speaks about her years since her release from prison, back in the sway of her mother to whom she has always been tied in a mutual bond of love and hate.

In 1984 she has a child, and with the support of her probation officer, Patricia Royston, fights for the right to keep it. For the first time in her life she feels total love and through the child gains a purpose and a framework for her life. But with her love for her child comes a terrible realisation of what she has done, and a new and agonising awareness of conscience which intensifies her inner chaos.

Mary talked a great deal about her mother in November 1995 when we met to discuss writing this book, without actually saying anything real about her. She was like a shadow weaving in and out of the background of her memory: a figure repeatedly referred to as "smart", but equally frequent as "sick" and "sad"; she kept appearing without becoming even momentarily a person. She came and went amid the torrent of words which gushed out of Mary as if this was — as if this had to be — the occasion when she would tell me everything: about Red Bank Special Unit, where she stayed for five years, and about the headmaster there,



Martin Brown: questioned about the effect a book would have on Brown's parents, Mary Bell said she didn't want to hurt them more. "But... but... there are things they don't know..."

'Her mother was like a shadow weaving in and out'

Mr Dixon, who implanted in her a first inkling of the difference between right and wrong — "You couldn't not learn to understand that, with Mr Dixon as your headmaster. I loved him," she said. "I will love him till I die."

Mary was unstoppable about Mr Dixon, unstoppable, too, about her mutinous prison years — "I wasn't going to give in to them. I wasn't going to become their creature. I wasn't going to be institutionalised." She learnt about power games and corruption and during those years, virtually unmanageable for the prison staff, used sex (with fellow inmates) and her manipulative gifts (on inmates and staff) in her attempts to dominate her environment.

She talked about her life after her release and about her child: again and again about the child, but never, not with one word, about her own childhood. Had she actually read *The Case of Mary Bell* (my book, published in 1972, in which there was so much about her childhood), I asked her. A year after her release from prison, she said, by now living under a different name, she had signed on for courses at a College of Higher Education in West Yorkshire — she refers to it as "the uni" — and it was in the library there that a student she knew, walking by with a book, had asked her whether she'd read it. "It's so sad," the girl had said, "so sad what they did to that little girl Mary Bell."

After that, Mary had read, "not all of it, just bits", she said. "It just wasn't a bit like my mother had said. I couldn't believe that there had been somebody who'd felt compassion for me. My mother had always said nobody did, nobody could, because I was so bad... such a shaming thing in her life. When I was released she said I was never to tell anybody that she was my mother, that she couldn't live with the shame of it and she introduced me to her pub pals as her sister, and at other times her cousin." She wanted now to talk about it all, she said, but even more, she wanted help in thinking about it all: she called



Victim two: nine weeks after the death of Martin, Brian Howe, aged three, was murdered

"setting the record straight". I asked her what there was to set straight. Was she claiming that she had been unjustly convicted? She shook her head. Not that, she said. It was almost five hours later by now. We had had sandwiches for lunch and unending cups of coffee and tea and she looked pale and very tired. "It wasn't that... simple," she said. "I want to talk about the way it happened... the way it was done... and... and... you know, go over the record of it, for myself. How could it have happened? How did I become such a child?"

Did she realise, I asked her, that such a book was bound to be controversial? That people were bound to think she did it for money? That both of us would be accused of insensitivity towards the two little victims' families by bringing their dreadful tragedy back into the limelight and, almost inevitably, of sensationalism, because of some of the material the book would have to contain? Above all, did she understand that readers would not stand for any suggestion of possible mitigation for her crimes? And had she faced the reality that if she did

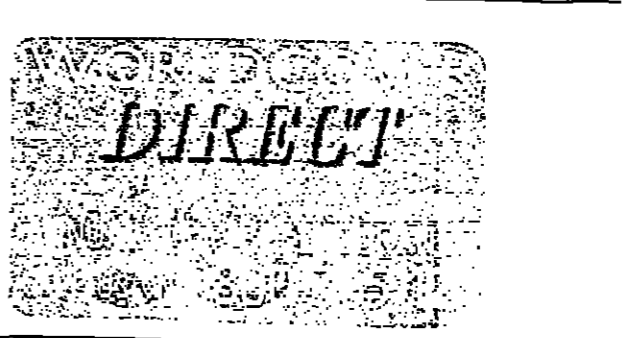
collaborate in such a book, it would expose her to renewed onslaughts by the media if they found her? It was the question about Martin Brown's and Brian Howe's families she replied to first. She had hurt them so much, she said, she really didn't want to hurt them more... and suddenly she was crying. "But... but... there are things they don't know... it won't change anything for them, I know, but still... What sort of things? I asked. "Oh, I don't know. Just things..." It was obvious that helping



How Mary's disappearance was reported in the press

her to organise her thoughts and bringing out whatever it was she wanted to say would, as I always suspected, require the right environment, carefully structured conversations, and, above all, time. The continuous media interest, she said a little later, was one of the many reasons why she had come to her decision. She thought that once she had told me all her story, answered all my questions as honestly as she could, perhaps they would leave her alone. "After all," she smiled a little crookedly, "once you get through with me, there won't be much left for anybody to

ask, will there?" I tried to disabuse her of this optimism. Newspapers, I told her, particularly the ones that had pursued her for so long, were a very different medium from a book, with a different readership, and reporters would always find questions to ask. And the money I myself would propose she receive if she decided to go ahead (hopefully to put in trust for her child), because I thought it was right, as without her such a book could not be written, would be a real moral problem, not only for the media, but for the families of the dead boys and for many sensitive people.



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CRIES UNHEARD: MARY BELL



Mary with her mother: the rest of the family knew nothing of the terrible abuse to which Mary was subjected



Mary's mother. Mary says that after the abuse: "She was nice to me, and she laughed. I felt afterwards she loved me"

'My mother, my mother would hold me, one hand pulling my head back...and...and'

There was never any possibility of Billy Bell being Mary's biological father. Betty (Mary's mother) had met him a few months after Mary was born.

She married him in March 1958, and P, her second child, Billy's son, would be born that autumn. They were living with her mother and her younger sister Isa in a pleasant flat in Gateshead, just across the river from Scotswood. Betty's mother, Mrs McC, despite suffering from migraines and tension, for which she took medication, had always been good at making a comfortable home. She was very careful about where she kept her pills, as she would tell me in 1970, "specially when there were kids about". She kept the bottle in the back of the used-needle compartment of an old gramophone which stood on top of a small chest, and kept the knitting-needle she used to extricate the bottle from its hiding place in a drawer.

Despite these precautions, one-year-old Mary somehow got hold of these pills and ate them. The baby had to find the knitting-needle, climb up to where the gramophone stood, reach to the back of it with the knitting-needle to dig out the bottle, unscrew its safety top and swallow enough of the unpleasant-tasting pills to almost kill her. As it happened, her grandmother found her in time; she was rushed to hospital, her stomach was pumped and she recovered.

Two years later, when Mary was almost three, Cath (Mary's aunt) came to visit them and brought two bags of dolly mixtures, one for Mary, one for her brother P, who was now 18 months old. The sisters went into the kitchen to make tea and when Cath came back she found the two children sitting on the floor munching sweets which had spilled onto the floor. To her horror, she saw among them a number of little blue pills which she recognised as Drinanyls (purple hearts) and the children said, yes, they'd eaten some of them.

Betty said the kids must have taken the bottle out of her handbag. Cath rushed to get a glass of hot water with salt in it. Both children

In the course of her extensive research, Gitta Sereny uncovered the terrible trauma that Mary Bell experienced, at the hands of, and directed by, her mother, almost from

her birth. Sereny puts these formative episodes at the very end of her book. We reproduce them because they are clearly such a vital key to Mary's behaviour.

were sick in the sink, and were then taken to hospital, but the doctors said everything had come out.

Three months later, in the summer of 1960, Betty and Mary were visiting her mother in Glasgow. Because her flat was on the third floor and the lavatories on the ground floor, the family was in the habit of letting the little children "wet in the sink".

One day, while Betty's mother was at her receptionist's job at a nearby hospital, Betty's brother P and younger sister Isa were sitting on the settee about 6ft from the sink. Next to the sink was a window which was wide open. Suddenly P saw Mary, whom Betty had been holding straddling the sink, falling out of the window. He lunged across the room and somehow managed to grab her by the ankles and pulled her in. "He was off work for three weeks after that because he hurt his back catching her," his sisters told me later.

Mary's worst "accident" happened about six months later, when she was almost four. The register at Newcastle General Hospital states: "Mary Flora Bell, 28 Elswick Road, Newcastle/Tyne 6/3/61 to 9/3/61: under care of consultant Dr Cooper."

Cath had rushed into Newcastle after a policeman came to tell her (she had no phone) that Mary was in hospital. By the time she arrived, Mary's stomach had been pumped and she had regained consciousness. Betty was standing in front of the ward. "Don't believe her," she implored her sister, crying. "She says I gave her those pills."

This time Mary had apparently swallowed a number of her mother's iron pills. When she woke up she said to the doctor: "Me mam gave me the Smarties..." and kept saying this on and off for 24 hours. And here there had been a witness, a little girl of five, Mary's best friend.

Cath met her in the street a few days later and she said: "Mary's mam gave her the Smarties in the back yard."

In *The Case of Mary Bell*, from which I have taken most of these

descriptions, I finished this section about Mary's childhood by saying that this was to be the last of Mary's accidents at home. But I was terribly wrong. I do not think for a minute that any of Betty's family knew of the dreadful use her mother made of Mary from a point some time soon after she stopped seeing them. However reluctant they might have been in the first four years of Mary's life to let anyone outside their family know of Betty's pathological feelings towards her first child, had they had any idea about what happened next, and would carry on happening during the next four years, they would, I am sure, have acted to save her.

I was, I must admit, at first so sceptical about the details that she remembered, and so concerned at the horrific nature of them, that I made her tell me three times: it is

on my tapes, it is transcribed. The first time was two weeks after we began to talk, in July 1996. The last time was at the beginning of December.

In July it took her four days to get it out, sometimes in a monotonous voice but more often in deep distress, her face growing paler and paler, breaking into a sweat, and finally, she would speak through desperate sobs, reverting at times, as she had done before under extreme emotional pressure, to the present tense.

She couldn't remember how old she was, but she thought four or five. "I wasn't yet in school," she said. She remembered being made to sit in the living-room and that there was a man on the bed with her mother. "What I remember, this man's penis is all white. I just couldn't understand it, where it came from, you know, or what it

was." She moved her nose as if she was smelling something nasty. "There was this smell, horrible, nasty like... But it was horrible, and then I was on the bed, and then... they turned on me."

As she answered my questions, one memory went into another. "I had these little white socks on and just a little top and, um, a nappy, a nappy-type thing... and my mother," she sighed deeply [my notes say, "letting her breath out bit by bit"], "my mother would hold me, one hand pulling my head back, by my hair, the other holding my arms back of me, my neck back like and... and... and I'd vomit."

"Sometimes she would blindfold me - she called it 'playing blind-man'-buff. And she would tie a stocking around my eyes and lift me up and twirl me around, laughing. And then she'd put a thing... a silky thing around my face to... to keep my mouth open and it was so dreadful, with the rosaries you know, bumping into me you know, I felt so bad, so bad, I felt so... so dirty."

How often did this happen? I asked. "I don't know. Not that often perhaps, or maybe quite a few times. I don't know."

I knew that a medical examina-

tion before she went to Red Bank had shown her to be intact. Did the men touch you, below? I asked. It was very, very difficult for her to find the words for the answer.

"Yes, but... and I don't mean... Not, you know, I don't think it was there. I mean I was held down on my stomach. It hurts like hell, it hurts... it really, really hurt. I was gagged but I screamed, 'It hurts, it hurts'. And she said to me, softly you know: 'It won't be long now, it won't hurt for long.' But it did, I was sore. I had marks, scratch marks on my legs and marks where I had things stuck into me." Things? What sort of things? "They were... sort of bullets, like a shotgun kind of bullet, with a brass thing, a suppository type of thing... I used to have them wivred into me."

She pulled up the skirt of the long dress she was wearing and showed me some curious round scars.

Did you ever wonder why they did that?

She shook her head. "Perhaps to make me cry? But I didn't, I wouldn't cry."

You are crying now; you are crying here.

"I wouldn't cry then," she repeated.

Did your mother give you things afterwards?

"Yes, sweets, and she was nice to me, and she laughed. I can remember times when I had these games. I felt afterwards she loved me. I had a bag of chips and I wouldn't get hit. I remember her then as very pretty and she didn't call me names, and even taught me to knit. But she ripped all the stitches off and threw the stuff at me."

Extracted from *Cries Unheard*, by Gitta Sereny, to be published by Macmillan on May 6, £20. © Gitta Sereny 1998

TOMORROW
The trial and what followed: the only girl in a boys' remand school



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Bell, book and the newspapers

Peter Stothard, Editor of The Times, on the responsibilities of the press to tell hard truths

I know that many readers of *The Times* will oppose the publication today of extracts from Gitta Sereny's book about the child-killer Mary Bell. *Cries Unheard* is the horrific story of a woman looking back at her life under an inquisitor's light. She sees her mother's life as a sadistic prostitute, her own childhood experiences as a sex-toy for masochist clients, her months as a killer of two small boys and her extended adolescence from the age of 11 to 21, as a saga of abuse and betrayal in English prisons. There are no pleasant sights. This is not a pleasant book to read. And, to pile quail upon quail, the author could research the book only by paying money to her subject.

Telegraph that the author and publisher first offered the serialisation rights, under agreed conditions of the strictest confidence, last month. The reaction of that newspaper and of its editor, Charles Moore, was enthusiastic. A substantial fee, almost twice what *The Times* eventually paid, was initially agreed. As Mr Moore made clear, he had no moral qualms about publication and he respected the author's reasons for wanting money to go to her subject. In principle, he said, he strongly supported the project.

Principle, however, turned out to be rather different from practice. In deciding not to serialise Gitta Sereny's book, he confessed his fear that jealous competitors, anxious to undermine his newspaper's reputation, would throw mud at it and that some would stick. He predicted consequences that would be catastrophic for *The Daily Telegraph*. Although publication of the book was clearly in the public interest, he said, the serialisation was just too dangerous for him.

Fear of danger is a sort of virtue, though not the sort that normally wins the praise of *The Daily Telegraph* leader columns. Rejection of principle in return for safety from criticism might be judged a sort of virtue too. So would the protection by an editor of his newspaper when it is under threat. But they are not the best values of *The Daily Telegraph*, and barely values at all in the school of Gitta Sereny, whom Mr Moore claims to adore.

Times readers are therefore the recipients of a serious piece of journalism whose virtues *The Daily Telegraph* praised but whose uncertain consequences that newspaper did not wish to face. Some of our readers may wish that *The Times* too had turned Gitta Sereny down. I can ask them only to read before they judge.

During his negotiations with the publisher of *Cries Unheard*, Mr Moore promised absolute confidentiality about all his dealings, including, as is normal in such negotiations, the very fact that he had been offered the book at all. This principled offer too, however, was followed by a preference for practical advantage. In *The Daily Telegraph* yesterday, as the criticism of *The Times* was rising and before anyone else had had the chance to read the book, he wrote a lengthy article, citing authorities as far apart as original sin and the Press Complaints Commission, all under the headline, "Why we refused to serialise the story of Mary Bell."

Only by attempting to understand what could conceivably have driven an eleven-year-old girl to kill two small boys who trusted her can we come any closer to stopping these crimes that outrage any society the most. It is the very sensitivity of the issue that makes the duty of the journalist plain.

Journalism's job is to shed light on life's darker side

Let me answer to those who feel full outrage at the payments made to Mary Bell by Gitta Sereny. Without those payments the book would not exist. The test lies in the book. I respect the views of my colleague Libby Purves who wrote here yesterday under the headline "Hear her, but don't pay". I am satisfied that Mary Bell's mind would not have been probed for the hours that Gitta Sereny required if payment had not been made. She would not have been heard, if she had not been paid. Those who can now read the book can now decide whether the cost was too high.

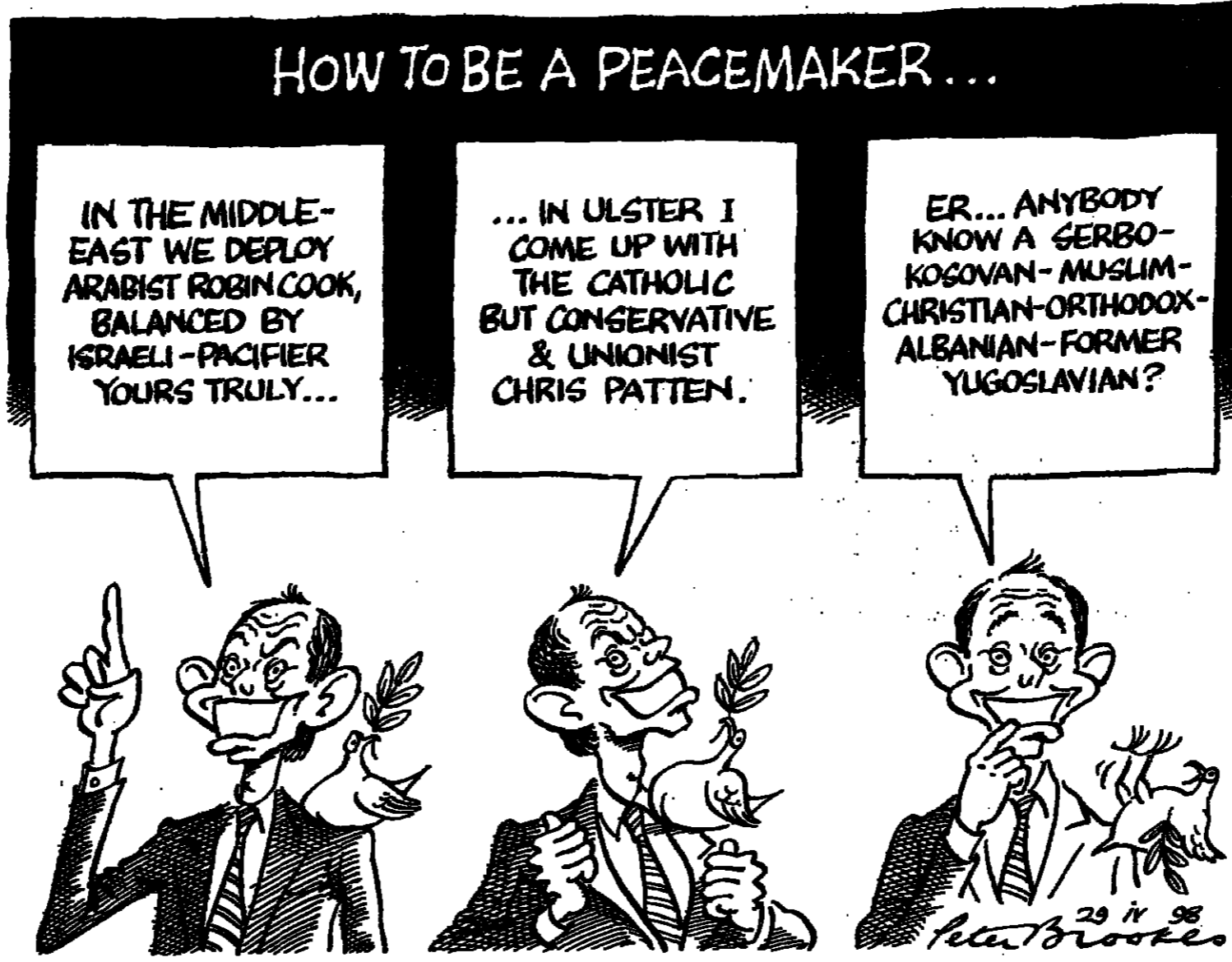
It is a fundamental function of journalism to shed light in dark corners of human life. The informed analysis of a 30-year-old crime, one that still has the power to move vast emotions, is a key role for a free press within an open society. These are tasks that only rarely win friends, I do not expect to win many friends in the next few days. The losing of friends is perhaps a necessary part of editing a newspaper. And yet some readers will still ask why *The Times*, their *Times*, should be the newspaper placing the miserable life of a massively disturbed young woman before their eyes this morning. They too deserve an answer.

The first work by Sereny on the Mary Bell case appeared in the *Telegraph* magazine in 1969 and it was to *The Daily*

IS TONY BLAIR suffering from Al Gore-syndrome? The Prime Minister is using the authority of his office for a whip-round for the Labour Party which brings to mind the allegations against the American Vice-President that he made fundraising telephone calls from federal property.

Diary Towers was yesterday delighted to receive an envelope stamped with the phrase "The Prime Minister". Anticipating my appointment to one of the government task-forces, I discovered the letter contained instead a eulogy to the administration's achievements, signed "The Rt Hon Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party". Included was one small favour: "Why not mark May 1 by encouraging a friend or relative to join us by filling in the membership form enclosed in this letter?" A direct debit instruction dropped out of the envelope.

The Prime Minister's letter sails close to the wind of the Cabinet Office rules, which state that ministers must ensure clear water between their government and party activities. Francis Mause, the Shadow Culture spokesman, said: "It is an absurd breach of the



If the Tories had won...

Despite the spin, Blair is completing Thatcherism, but by other means

I imagine that you woke up a year ago this week and found something most odd had happened. The Tories had squeaked back into power. John Major had polled his 1992 vote and remained in Downing Street, understandably rather pleased with himself. The Blairites were shattered. The pollsters were disembowelled and the media got drunk. A bored Britain had looked at its latest bank balance, wandered down to the polling booth and voted for the devil it knew.

Would Britain today be any different, really? I know what I am supposed to say. I am supposed to be dazzled by spin. Britain is so much more refreshed, so revitalised, so new. It has a spring in its step, a self-confidence. New Britannia is hot, and cool. Out has gone the old Tory and old Labour ways. In has come a way of the third kind. The faces are different. Different people, different faces, different ways. On it goes. Ways facing different people, people facing different ways. And all so new.

Such blanchance has its place on the political menu. What Tony Blair's project achieved four years ago was remarkable. It asserted the primacy of politics in public affairs, and the primacy of feeling good in politics. Feeling good is about image, smiles, soothing words, Orwell's language "designed to anaesthetise a portion of the brain". This anaesthetic is not cynical but to a purpose, to help necessary but unpalatable change slide down the gullet, in this case the gullet of Labour voters. Politics is the art of holding public attention and Mr Blair is good at it. There was a war to be fought, a war for power. New Labour's approach was that of General Colin Powell. You hurt everything you have into battle, because you sincerely want to win.

A year ago Britain wanted a change of face. It "slung the bastards out", if only because it sensed that elites need periodic boxing and coxing. Britons have had a year's relief from the turmoils of the early Nineties. Every civil war requires a lull, so the nation can bury its dead, clean blood from the walls and sow next year's harvest. Hence Mr Blair. In just a year he has won a personal standing that it took Margaret Thatcher five years and a war to achieve. Given the trials and errors inevitable in the early years of an ingenious administration, the mishap rate has been astonishingly low. The

Simons, Ecclestons and Irvines have been passing clouds of no great moment. Efficiency has returned to British politics. These people are still a class act. Even the dyed-in-the-wool sceptic must acknowledge it.

But that does not answer my question. It is not hard to be efficient if you are taking over a successful plant and leaving it as is. A change of political leadership normally implies more than a change of cast. It implies a new play. Labour's manifesto pledge was, after all, "more than a change of government, a new course for the future".

Looking back over the year, we can see that "government" hardly missed a beat with the departure of the Tories. Gordon Brown's Budget was one that Kenneth Clarke might well have introduced. There was no rise in direct taxes. Economic discipline is being exerted through interest rates (albeit via the Bank of England) as under the Tories. Britain has not joined the euro. It will do so "only if and when economic circumstances are right", which was what the Tories said.

The Government is seeking fundamental reform of social security and pensions. So were the Tories. It is targeting single parent, housing, sickness and unemployment benefit and pressing on with the "Welfare to Work" scheme. It is capping local government, centralising education and housing families about, all Tory policies. The Government wants to be more involved in sentencing, more concerned with paedophilia, more sceptical of legal aid.

Waiting lists are lengthening. Student support is being cut. Defence and grand opera are being reviewed. Another breakthrough has been declared in Northern Ireland. Beef policy is a shambles. The lottery is being raided and privatisation extended. Tory spending targets are honoured, and any thought that the "comprehensive spending review" will yield extra money firmly squashed. There is nothing here to

The language of this Government could not be further removed from the inclusive statism of old Labour. The key words might be read out of the Conservative manifesto, those of personal, family and community responsibility. As David Selbourne points out in his Centre for Policy Studies pamphlet, New Labour talks of the poor having duties not rights. Its old libertarian agenda has vanished, along with its egalitarian one. Labour is dirigiste at home and interventionist abroad. The cause is no longer the redistribution of wealth. It is the dissemination of morality. High Toryism may have lost the war. It won the argument.

How long this Government can stay true to its Thatcherite credentials is an open question. In making itself more accountable to the media than to Parliament, it runs a risk. The media is inherently disloyal, Parliament only usually so. Now the first year is over, the baby is no longer gurgling in the cot. It is into solids and learning to crawl. For the party and many junior ministers, the first shelf of crockery is within reach. The terrible twos beckon.

We can already see an ominous symptom of the old politics, a springtime restlessness. We are told there must be an imminent reshuffle. Why? A spending review is under way, which is bound to raise and dash expectations. Again why? There is talk once more of toughening up Downing Street, to give it more power against the Treasury. More coordination is allegedly needed in cross-departmental policy. These are the familiar signs of the politics of fidget, that so enervated Mr Major's tenure. Mr Blair should stick to Bagehot and keep life dull. The Government is not so broke that it needs mending.

So far Mr Blair has brought to Thatcherism a touch of magic. He is the king on the cake — with John Prescott as the marzipan. He is encasing Thatcherism in consensus and sugar-dusting it with joy. Last year's election was never to find a warrior or philosopher. It sought a custodian to carry on the Glorious Revolution begun in 1979 and under way ever since. Few wanted this revolution reversed or even revised. They just wanted it to stop hurting. To have its pains relieved with political balm. That was Mr Blair's job specification. So far it has been met.

Strip away the Thatcherism and the spin, and Mr Blair in government is doing precisely the job Mr Major attempted to do after 1992. That job, to adapt Clausewitz, was the completion of Thatcherism by other means. Mr Blair's own campaign to get rid of Clause Four, to entrench Tory spending plans and to press ahead with welfare reform was directed at bedding down the upheaval in Britain's political economy initiated under Baroness Thatcher. These reforms, mere aspirations elsewhere in Europe, are recognised by Mr Blair as British triumphs. If, to protect them, he has to insulate Britain from European policies, so be it. He is happy to ally Labour with Bill Clinton's America.

The apologists go through this argument protesting that Blairism is quite different from Thatcherism. They point out that Mr Blair is a healer, inclusive, youthful, unfringed to trade unions and little children. He may do the same things as the Tories would have done, but he means them different. I reply that this is the essence of his remit. The dirty work has been done. Healing, inclusion, consensus are the next stage in the treatment.

Simon Jenkins

which a Major Cabinet would have taken exception.

These are massive continuities in British government. I am sure that even devolution to Scotland, Wales and London, where Labour has shown most radicalism, would have shown some light of day after a Tory victory. Compare this with the reckless spending and policy chaos of other electoral "revolutions" — in 1945, 1964 and 1979 — and Labour's record this past year borders on a conspiracy of inertia. The Blair team has embodied the maxim that you campaign in poetry but you govern in prose. "Dullness in parliamentary government," said Bagehot, "is a test of its excellence; an indication of its success." Mr Blair's Cabinet was not born dull, but may yet thrust dullness upon itself.

politics, the razzmatazz and the spin, and Mr Blair in government is doing precisely the job Mr Major attempted to do after 1992. That job, to adapt Clausewitz, was the completion of Thatcherism by other means. Mr Blair's own campaign to get rid of Clause Four, to entrench Tory spending plans and to press ahead with welfare reform was directed at bedding down the upheaval in Britain's political economy initiated under Baroness Thatcher. These reforms, mere aspirations elsewhere in Europe, are recognised by Mr Blair as British triumphs. If, to protect them, he has to insulate Britain from European policies, so be it. He is happy to ally Labour with Bill Clinton's America.

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Alan Coren



Will she always be like an icon in the bin?

It is Monday morning, and I am standing here at my wheeled-bin, fraught by thoughts of Mr Okamoto. I came out to dispose of Sunday's newspapers, but I cannot move. Mr Okamoto has immobilised me. That is because I learnt, a few minutes ago, that Mr Okamoto's marriage was in trouble. It is in trouble thanks to evidence before an industrial tribunal last week, when the sacked plaintiff alleged that her employer, Mr Okamoto, had upset her by referring to the late Diana as a "bloody big-nosed princess"; and, this morning, the news has broken that Mrs Okamoto is even more upset with her hubby than the plaintiff was. She rang him from their Paris flat and threatened to leave him. He could hear her throwing crockery about. Then she flew home to their house in Kew, had another shouting match, and walked out. Intervened by a caring press, Mr Okamoto blubbed: "Diana has put my marriage in peril."

What does this have to do with me and my dustbin? Everything. For, having spent my breakfast reading about the Okamoto split in today's paper, I armfulled yesterday's for disposal, elbowing open the bin-lid, and was about to drop them when I spotted, on top of the pile, a 10 x 8 studio portrait of Diana, which *The Mail on Sunday* had sent me as a fabulous exclusive free gift, suitable for framing, a lasting memento for den or boudoir. However, though it is a charming photo, I did not want it hanging on my wall. I have never hung royal photographs on my walls, this is not the Cricklewood Consulate, and I do not intend to start now. But the Okamoto incident has made me suddenly uneasy about consigning the snapshot to the rubbish, since the consequences of that action are fraught with imponderability. Oh, I think I know Mrs Coren well enough to be fairly certain that she would not, if she spotted the portrait curving among the eggshells, begin defenestrating saucers and phoning lawyers, but what about the dustman? Where the Princess is concerned, national feelings run high, I could well find fish-heads all over the lawn, at best, and at worst, teeth all over the pavement.

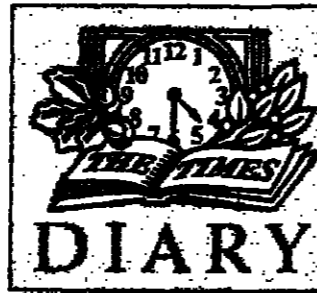
Should I tear it up, then, into unrecognisable fragments? But how unrecognisable might a fragment not be, to the eagle eye of a trained totter? What reaction might follow his seeing a beloved icon torn to shreds? And if I burnt it, who is to say that some prodigious neighbour might not clock the wisping smoke, focus a binocular, and gossip me from Cricklewood to Coventry, drummed out of the tennis club, stripped of my Neighbourhood Watch spatules, shunned in the boozers, refused the loan of secateurs?

Worse yet — else I should not be cursing you with my worries — I rather fear that this sort of crisis is not mine alone. For the Princess has become a shibboleth. She is a watershed, and a yardstick: we are defined by our response to her. In the few months following the death that made her a source of national unity, she has turned into a source of national division. Only a chump would drop her name in pub or club or stadium, raise any of her myriad contentious topics at a dinner party, ask an opinion of the Clapham omnibus: you cannot even choose a magazine or poke a coin into a collection box or subscribe to a newspaper without publicly declaring, willy-nilly, an interest which could lead to almost anything.

So can that day be far off when, before being given a mortgage, or a credit card, or a subscription to Reader's Digest, or a lottery ticket, applicants will have to tick a box declaring whether they are for Diana or against — not knowing which answer will find favour? Will carry defence barristers begin introducing the Diana factor as a mitigation in wife-batterings, road-rages, murders, even? Will doctors refuse calls to houses not displaying a framed portrait, dentists grow differentially clumsy, cabbies throw you out in the middle of nowhere, policemen withhold the time of day without a signed statement, and Santa Clauses require the supplicant contents of their laps to state their sympathies?

Too many questions, you complain, not enough answers. I dare not give them. I have already gone too far. Tomorrow, this column will probably be burning on a pole outside Aithorp. I feel a farwa coming on.

Postal order



EDWARD WELSH

aims to capture Keaton's "Valentino-style" good looks: "Keaton is one of the geniuses of comic cinema, so it's about time people put him back on the pedestal he deserves." Let's hope the statue does not start doing slapstick tumbles.

Pole position

THE callow youth responsible for "Cool Britannia" is clambering up Labour's greasy pole. Mark Leonard, the 23-year-old researcher for Demos, will stand for the party in Hampstead Town in next month's local elections. Unhelpfully Leonard, the author of the report on rebranding Britain from Blair's favourite think-tank, would not dis-

cuss how he hopes to put policy into practice: "What I do in my private time is nobody's business." Obviously, the boy has a lot to learn if he hopes to escape workdom for good.

SOME wise words from Lord Williams of Mostyn, the Home Office Minister: "Many years ago my father warned me, 'If you ever go to the House of Lords, avoid two things: loose women and hypothetical questions.'" How different from the Commons.

Brussels bout

IS THIS the estrangement of the Nineties? Lord Freeman, the former Conservative minister, has placed a fanatical Europhobe on the approved Central Office list for next year's Euro-elections. Mike Penning could be on the MEPs short-list by the summer after spending the past six years working for Sir Teddy Taylor, the notorious Brussels-muncher. Penning's greatest claim to fame, however, was to make John Major's life a misery: he was chief puppet-master to the eight Conservative MPs from whom the whip was withdrawn because of their bloody-mindedness over Europe. I hope he succeeds: Brussels might suddenly come alive.



IN A withering outburst against George Michael, Camille Paglia, the American feminist writer, has split with the homosexual community to attack the promiscuity of gay men. The high-profile lesbian attacks the "anything goes" attitude among homosexuals and the media's gentle treatment of the singer after his arrest outside a Los Angeles lavatory this month. "I'm getting sick and tired of the sentimental, feel-good, liberal propaganda that is concealing and denying the blatant, Nero-era decadence of so many gay men's lives, where compulsive, tunnel-vision promiscuity has become institutionalised." Paglia accuses Michael of self-absorption: "A gifted artist like George Michael should be focusing his obsessiveness on the recording studio, not the Beverly Hills latrines... he was just doing what comes naturally in the social fast lane, protected by a media culture that facetiously equates homosexuality with heterosexuality and asks no deep questions about human psychology beyond the superficial liberal vs conservative, freedom vs oppression dichotomy." A case of the pot and the kettle?

فكرنا من الأصل



DOUBLE DUTCH

A Franco-German fudge that Blair ought to resist

The stage is set, the script was written long ago and the actors are rehearsed and ready. With Tony Blair as benign impresario, the curtain rises this weekend in Brussels on Act 1 of the long-awaited EMU drama. In the anxiety to ensure a triumphal launch for the single currency, almost nothing has been left to chance. Muted muttering from the Bundesbank regardless, it has long been clear that 11 of the European Union's 15 member states will be declared eligible, despite the underlying divergence between their economies. Ahead of the formal event, the financial markets have obligingly been penning rave reviews. And no government is more determined than Britain's to ensure the success of this avowedly historic occasion.

There is only one potentially show-wrecking snag. There is total deadlock on the acutely sensitive question of who is to be appointed president of the European Central Bank, the independent institution created under the Maastricht treaty to run the new currency. Germany, supported by most EU governments, is adamant that Wim Duisenberg, the stolidly monetarist Dutch head of the interim European Monetary Institute, must have the job and this was regarded as settled until last November, when President Chirac and Lionel Jospin, the Prime Minister, united to throw a French spanner in the works. Their candidate is Jean-Claude Trichet, the equally orthodox head of the Banque de France — on the intrinsically suspect grounds that a French president was part of an allegedly agreed quid pro quo for sitting the bank in Frankfurt.

The decision must be unanimous and, since the bank opens for business on July 1, six months before EMU goes into operation, further delay could unsettle the markets. The pressure on the British presidency to manufacture a compromise this weekend is thus considerable. Mr Blair is keen to oblige. He should not be too keen. Delay may be undesirable, but much greater damage could

be done if this battle is settled through the kind of horse-trading that is the trademark of EU politics, where nationalities, reciprocal favours and unrelated deals take priority over professional qualifications.

The most likely scenario is to split the ECB president's eight-year non-renewable term, stipulated in the Maastricht treaty, between the two men. It would also be the worst. It is already evident that the launch of the single currency is a political undertaking, not a technical fix to underpin the single market; that much has been underlined by the wholesale manipulation of the Maastricht qualifying criteria. The costs of EMU failure would also be political, and they would now be high. That is why, for the sake of credibility, the currency's manager must be advertisedly free of political pressures.

On the criteria, the treaty language left some leeway for creative accounting, although far less than governments have found it expedient to pretend exists. But the protocol setting up the ECB, the institutional bedrock of the euro, provides no scope for a fudge. The ECB president's term cannot be divided, like Thebes after the death of Creon, without breaching the Maastricht treaty. In terms of market perceptions, that is also true of any "gentleman's agreement" to do so without putting it in writing. Political jockeying deferred is still political jockeying.

France may well use its veto. It would be a defensible move: Helmut Kohl's refusal to countenance M Trichet — who could do the job as well as Mr Duisenberg and possibly better — is as political as France's determination to have him. At the heart of this dispute is the deep division between Paris and Bonn about the role of European monetary policy. None of Mr Blair's presentational skills can hide that truth. But he can at least preserve the façade of ECB integrity by sticking to the letter of Maastricht, even if that means a last-minute search for a third candidate to serve the full eight-year term.

OPEN AND SHUT CASE

Any inquiry should not weaken the RUC

Chris Patten is an inspired choice to chair a commission of inquiry into the future of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. A distinguished servant of the Crown, who has fought to preserve the rule of law from subversion, he is in a position to strengthen the protection Ulster's citizens deserve. The demand for an inquiry had come loudest from republicans, anxious to destabilise a constabulary which had become an effective counter-terrorist force. Republicans hoped that an innocent from abroad might be drafted in with an agenda to indulge them. Instead, a Conservative and Unionist politician has been approached and it is to be hoped he will accept the better to bolster a force under fire.

Mr Patten has experience of the Province without any current and compromising involvement in its politics, having served as a minister at the Northern Ireland Office in the Eighties. During that time Mr Patten consolidated his reputation for plain-dealing and showed particular sensitivity to ways in which the concerns of nationalists could be accommodated within the Union. Since then, conspicuously in Hong Kong, he has proved he is no pushover. Faced with Chinese critics who had used violence in the past and continued to clothe their aggressive instincts in the language of ancient wrongs, Mr Patten proved resolute. He should show the same fortitude and commitment to democracy when dealing with Gerry Adams.

Mr Patten recognised in Hong Kong that British stewardship had not been free of errors but the balance, especially in the years immediately before his arrival, was heavily on the credit side. So it is with policing in Ulster. There have been mistakes, but the recent record of the force is a source of legitimate pride among its members. Operating under conditions of stress and danger almost unknown in the rest of the United Kingdom, RUC officers have exercised restraint and even-handedness. The force policed loyalist protests at

Drumcree and Harryville with the same exemplary discipline which it has deployed to contain nationalist agitation.

Allegations of sectarianism are politically motivated and statistically skewed. Although the force is disproportionately Protestant, that is a consequence of IRA intimidation of potential Catholic recruits rather than evidence of discrimination within the police. After the IRA called its ceasefire the proportion of applicants from the Catholic community for jobs with the RUC rose to over 30 per cent of the total, strikingly close to the sectarian balance in the Province. Only the threat of assassination at the hands of republican terrorists determined to undermine and marginalise the force depressed the number of Catholic recruits.

Republicans argue they want a replacement for the RUC which can command cross-community support and operate as a "normal" police force yet they frustrate any attempt by the RUC to operate normally. Republican activists have even prevented RUC officers from conducting road safety classes in Catholic schools. The RUC could become a "normal" police force tomorrow, in the same way as, say, the Lothian and Borders Police are, if republicans were unequivocally to abandon the armed struggle and decommission their arms. It is only the, still present, threat of terrorist violence which compels the RUC to maintain its heightened level of vigilance.

Mr Patten should certainly consider what reforms might allow constitutional nationalists to feel at ease with the RUC, but his main task would be to enhance the operational effectiveness of a Crown force. He could best do that by keeping the Constabulary, as the Hong Kong police were, Royal. The highest mark of civil favour in our society should not be withdrawn from those who have sacrificed so much. And the highest duty of those who have Ulster's interests at heart should be the security of its people.

FORGIVENESS FREES

Keiko Holmes is honoured and blessed as a peacemaker

Forgiving the unrepentant is like drawing pictures on water. This Japanese proverb is characteristically succinct. It is precisely because the Japanese have appeared too unrepentant, have never fully made amends to the British for their actions during the war, that many former POWs find it almost impossible to forgive them. Veterans who suffered brutal torture and degradation at the hands of Japanese forces are anguished by the forthcoming visit of Emperor Akihito to London. It will be the first formal visit by a Japanese Head of State since the current Emperor's father, Hirohito, visited the capital in 1971 and was greeted by sullen and silent crowds along the Mall. And still, 28 years later, painful resentments linger. The more militant campaigners are threatening to send their medals back to the Queen in protest. Others demand not only a full and meaningful apology but financial compensation too.

This bitterness is understandable among those who endured hideous atrocities. But it is damaging — not least when, passed down through the generations, it taints the attitudes of those who were not even alive during the war. That is why the mission of Mrs Keiko Holmes is so impressive. Work-

ing in a spirit of healing and reconciliation, this Japanese national who married a British businessman has for some seven years been organising pilgrimages of former POWs and their families to Japan. There they are helped to come to terms with the horrors of the Second World War, to visit cemeteries and meet a new generation of Japanese people, forming friendships which, it is hoped, will prove more lasting than hate.

Mrs Holmes's healing work is part of a wider strategy shared by both governments to knit Britain and Japan. During Mr Blair's visit to Tokyo earlier this year, for example, plans were discussed for a system of scholarships for young students to study in each others' countries. Such ideas can only lead to a dissolving of differences, a bridging of an injurious rift.

When yesterday Keiko Holmes was presented with an honorary OBE by the Queen, it was part of a soothing process intended to ease the way for Emperor Akihito's visit. But her investiture should be seen as more than simply a diplomatic gesture. It is a mark of respect for someone who believes that we cannot only learn to forgive, but also to forget.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Ethical to pay for Mary Bell's story?

From Mr Nick Weall

Sir, In the controversy over the Mary Bell book (reports, April 27, 28) I think there is one fundamental point. Mary Bell gave up a considerable amount of her time and inner thoughts to Gina Sereny. If money was the key to gaining this, then it might well have been money well spent.

Mary Bell has, no doubt, been reintegrated into our materialistic society, perhaps we should not be too surprised if she might appreciate a little more money in her life.

What has happened to Christian forgiveness? How can we reasonably condemn Mary Bell to a life of social rejection and attempt to control her income, for a crime she committed at the age of 11? At that age her parents and immediate environment must have had an enormous influence over her.

We stand to gain as a society from any insights gained from Gina Sereny's serious research, surely we should not begrudge Mary Bell fair recompense for co-operating?

Yours faithfully,
NICK WEALL,
54 Norbury Avenue,
Walford, Hertfordshire WD1 1PJ,
April 28.

From Mr Alfred Finer

Sir, The controversy surrounding the payment to Mary Bell for her help in producing a book about her criminal activities as a child has, according to your report of today, prompted a former director of Social Services to welcome the publication as of great value in getting Mary Bell's side of her story. The author, Gina Sereny, is quoted as saying: "It would have been an impossible project without her collaboration."

I venture to suggest that it would have perhaps been impossible to achieve the sales which the author is looking for, without having the input from Mary Bell. This payment was unnecessary for a serious insight as to why a woman, as a child, committed those terrible crimes.

During custody Mary Bell was in the care of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, chaplains and, no doubt, researchers. I am confident that there is ample knowledge into the mind of Mary Bell, some written in learned journals, and all obtained without direct payment to the criminal, other than in the form of her keep as a guest of HM Prisons.

Yours faithfully,
ALFRED FINER,
15 Regency House, N3 3JZ,
April 27.

Life in the future

From the Chief Executive of The London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange (Liffe)

Sir, It is not apparent from your article, "Men with no future keep looking on the bright side of life" (April 23), that Liffe continues to be the world's second largest futures and options exchange with trading volumes growing at 20 per cent a year.

Without a doubt Liffe is going through tremendous changes at the moment. However, the exchange's decision to introduce a world-beating electronic trading system does not mean that traders "will be all but gone by the millennium".

Many products continue to trade very successfully via "open outcry". For example, Liffe's market share of European short-term interest-rate contracts is rising and it has over 99 per cent market share of the key German Euro-mark futures contracts. We have just stolen a march on our rivals by being first with a euro contract — potentially a hugely successful contract — as well as a new European stock-index contract.

The writers of this article have fertile imaginations and make some absurd allegations about the behaviour of traders. While the Liffe trading floor is a lively, vibrant and colourful place the traders are there to trade and that is what they do. Perhaps the main exception is the effort they make to raise funds for charitable causes, amounting to £300,000 in 1997.

We provide invaluable risk-management services to the global financial community, which affects all of us who have jobs, pensions, loans, savings and mortgages. Liffe has a nominal daily turnover of close to £250 billion and makes an annual contribution of almost £1 billion to UK invisible earnings.

I believe your article is misplaced, inaccurate and belittles the true benefits and strengths of the exchange.

Yours faithfully,
DANIEL HODGSON,
Chief Executive,
The London International Financial Futures and Options Exchange,
Cannon Bridge, EC4R 3XX,
April 28.

Things to come?

From Mr Paul Batterbury

Sir, As I drove into London from the south on Sunday I noticed two temporary but adjacent road signs: "Millennium Dome Construction Traffic" and "Peter the Great Exhibition". Are they linked in some prophetic way?

Yours sincerely,
PAUL BATTERBURY,
Pelham House, Worktop College,
Worktop, Nottinghamshire S80 3AP,
batterbury@btinternet.com
April 27.

Competition Bill and the press

From the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry

Sir, Lord McNally (letter, April 27) invited me to set out what was unworkable about his amendment to the Competition Bill, on the abuse of dominance in the newspaper industry. No doubt Lord McNally would acknowledge that Parliament is the proper place for the Government to set out its position on the amendment, and the Bill will shortly be debated in the House of Commons. However, it is no secret that the amendment is hopelessly unclear on such matters as how market dominance would be assessed under the new prohibition, which companies would be covered and what sorts of business or editorial practices would be banned. The effect of the amendment would be to inhibit genuine and beneficial competition between newspapers, which can only be bad news for consumers.

Lord McNally's analogy with the newspaper merger provisions in the Fair Trading Act is unhelpful. There are specific public interest issues, such as accurate presentation of news and

free expression of opinion, to be considered when deciding whether or not to allow a transfer of newspapers. That is why we are keeping the FTA provisions. The Bill, on the other hand, deals with matters which are common across the economy. It is the Government's view that anti-competitive behaviour and abuses of dominance should be stopped wherever they take place.

To this end the Competition Bill already introduces tough new powers to deal with anti-competitive behaviour. These include a prohibition against abuse of dominance, including predatory pricing, which will be genuinely effective, unlike the amendment. Newspapers will not be exempt.

The reforms in the Bill are long overdue. Our approach has been widely supported by business, practitioners and consumer groups. It deserves Lord McNally's support too.

Yours etc,
IAN McCARTNEY,
Department of Trade and Industry,
1 Victoria Street, SW1H 0ET,
April 28.

Japan's former PoWs

From Mr Peter Collier

Sir, I regard it as a great pity that British veterans feel it necessary to insult the Emperor of Japan during his forthcoming visit to Britain (report, April 20). Whilst I would be the first to agree that former prisoners of war are long overdue for an unreserved apology for the horrific way in which they were treated by the Japanese Armed Forces during the Second World War, this surely cannot be the right way to address their grievances to the Japanese Government.

His Imperial Majesty cannot reasonably be held responsible for the crimes that were carried out in the name of his late father, any more than the present German President could be held accountable for the crimes of the Third Reich. It must also be remembered that, as a constitutional monarch, the Emperor is bound from expressing his own personal opinions on the matter, whatever they might be, in much the same way as our Queen is unable to become personally involved in political issues. It is the Japanese Government which must be pressed, and pressed hard, on this issue.

It is sad that some British veterans, who during all they endured conducted themselves with an honour and dignity that their captors sadly lacked, intend now to act in such an undignified manner towards a man who was just a young boy at the time they were so brutally mistreated.

Yours sincerely,
P. COLLIER,
8 Yewtree Drive,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AL,
April 20.

From Mr Sam Falle

Sir, As a former prisoner of war of the Japanese, may I explain why I am interested in reconciliation with our former enemies.

My ship, the destroyer HMS *Encounter*, was sunk by an overwhelming Japanese naval force in the battle of the Java Sea on March 1, 1942, to-

gether with HMS *Exeter*, of River Plate fame, and the USS *Pope*.

The Japanese rescued as many survivors as they could find, taking much time over the operation.

When my shipmates and I — over 300 in all — scrambled aboard the small Japanese destroyer *Ikazuchi*, weak after 24 hours in the water and covered in oil, we were given an astonishingly friendly welcome.

The Japanese sailors cleaned the oil off us, gave us clothing, cane chairs to sit on, hot milk, bully beef and biscuits. *Ikazuchi's* captain came down from the bridge and spoke to us in English: "You have fought bravely, now you are the honoured guests of the Imperial Japanese Navy."

He lived up to these words, and for the 24 hours we remained aboard we could not have been better treated.

Yours sincerely,
SAM FALLE,
Hornsved Slättina 3,
S57033 Mariannelund, Sweden,
April 25.

From Mr David Young

Sir, Two items in *The Times* of April 20 particularly caught my attention. One was William Rees-Mogg's article, "We're still waiting for those apologies". The other, Robert Whyman's report on Emperor Akihito's insistence on meeting ordinary Britons when he visits this country next month.

It is not strictly correct to say there has been no apology from Japan. The present Prime Minister's apology in January this year, at the time of Tony Blair's visit to Japan, was the latest of several such.

Having served myself in the Fourteenth Army in Burma through 1944 and 1945, and as a member of the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, I welcome the Emperor's visit and his desire to meet ordinary Britons. And I know of many others who do the same.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID YOUNG,
15 Vale Avenue, Brighton BN1 8UB,
April 21.

Children's burns centre

From the Regional Directors of the South Thames and North Thames Regional Offices, NHS Executive

Sir, Many of the issues raised by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne and others ("Plea for Guy's as child burns centre", letter, April 15), are receiving close scrutiny, with a London-wide picture in mind.

The writers of the letter make much of the North Thames/South Thames split. But frankly, this is irrelevant in our planning for the future, particularly in such specialised fields as burns. Both Sir Leslie Turnbull's review of *London's Health Services* earlier this year and last year's government White Paper on the NHS have promulgated the need for future planning of health services to transcend administrative boundaries.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL CRISP,
Regional Director, South Thames,
RON KERR,
Regional Director, North Thames,
NHS Executive,
40 Eastbourne Terrace, W2 3QR,
April 22.

Young offenders

From Mr Cedric Lynch

Sir, May I suggest that places on the square-rigger, proposed by Vice-Admiral Sir Louis Le Bailly as an alternative to prison for young criminals (letter, April 27), are first offered free of charge to young people who have not offended, with offenders getting any which still remain unclaimed? If this idea is not practical, I suggest that there should be a published tariff of offences to which the scheme applies. Then young criminals need not waste their time on offences which are harrowing to their victims but which are not considered serious enough to merit a free adventure holiday.

Yours faithfully,
C. M. LYNCH,
8 Heath Drive, Potters Bar,
Hertfordshire EN6 1EH,
April 27.

Ride the train and remove the strain

From Mr J. S. Matthews

Sir, Who on earth envisaged that the party of overseas ministers attending a European Union conference in Chester would go from Manchester airport via Crewe (reports April 24, 25, 28)? All that was needed was a coach or coaches to take them the four miles to Hale station, a Grade II listed building, tolerably well maintained though needing a good wash down.

From there North Western Trains would have taken them, at very reasonable cost, through the pleasant mid-Cheshire countryside straight to Chester, without even thinking about Crewe.

North Western Trains has greatly improved the Chester line and it is a pity that even the Department of the Environment could not give it a little bit of encouragement.

Yours faithfully,
J. S. MATTHEWS,
7 Riddings Road,
Hale, Altrincham, WA15 9DS,
April 25.

From Mr Alan Brooke Turner

Sir, Given the importance of image today, it is surprising that the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions did not consider an expedient employed by Field Marshal Prince Gregory Potemkin, Governor of New Russia, in 1787. To prevent Catherine the Great from observing the true conditions during a southern tour, he assembled mobile "Potemkin villages", peopled by men dressed as village peasants (*Europe: A History*, by Professor Norman Davies, Oxford University Press, 1996, p658), to create the impression of prosperity.

Apart from rendering unnecessary the provision of "60 top-of-the-range petrol-driven cars" and ensuring the preservation in the minds of the visitors of the appropriate illusion of a top-of-the-range, state-of-the-art British railway system, this solution would have offered the additional advantage of creating jobs for any unemployed scenery painters living in the Manchester area.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN BROOKE TURNER,
Poultons, Moor Lane,
Dormansland,
Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6NX,
April 25.

From Mr Andrew Colebourne

Sir, Why 60 cars rather than at most six luxury, single-deck coaches or four double-deckers?

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW COLEBOURNE,
37 Napier Road,
Leightonstone, E11 3JY,
April 25.

Paper clips

From Mr M. J. Soley

Sir, Miss Marjorie Dawson's letter (April 17; see also letters, April 21 and 25) duly joined my cuttings from the week's *Times*, to be filed for posterity. My collection, dating back 30 years, contains wonderful examples of un-Cool Britannia.

A cutting itself could be termed *charta seca* (cut paper) or *chartula* (little paper), hence chartasectarian or chartularist. I prefer the latter.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. SOLEY,
106 Moffatts Lane, Brookmans Park,
Hertfordshire AL9 7RW,
April 25.

From Mr Peter H. Gillard

Sir, The practice is clippophilia and its practitioners clippophilists.

Yours faithfully,
PETER H. GILLARD,
54 Greenland Quay,
Surrey Docks, SE16 1RW,
April 22.

From Mrs J. Sutherland

Sir, Clipping is the easy part — then what? Apart from obvious files such as People, Health, Religion, Car, Finance, Cookery and Garden, everything else goes into a bulging Miscellaneous and is lost forever.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH SUTHERLAND,
7 Broom Acres,
Sandhurst, Berkshire GU48 8PN,
April 21.

From Mrs M. Price

Sir, According to my teenagers, this practice is known as "Mum trying to make us take an interest in the outside world again".

Yours faithfully,
M. PRICE,
The Glyn, Victoria Road,
Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6AP,
April 23.

April's showers

From Mr William Neill

Sir, During my walk yesterday across the local countryside it struck me that there could be at least one happy farmer somewhere in this country. The one who planted rice. Does he exist?

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM NEILL,
Templis, Broadwell,
Moreton-in-Marsh,
Gloucestershire GL56 0TU,
April 27.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

OBITUARIES

JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD

Jean-François Lyotard, French philosopher, died on April 27 aged 73. He was born on August 10, 1924.

Jean-François Lyotard was one of the leaders of the loose intellectual movement that developed in France in the wake of the events of May 1968...



In 1979, Lyotard published his best-known book, La Condition post-moderne, about the collapse under advanced capitalism of the "great historical narratives"...

GODFREY KENTON

Godfrey Kenton, actor, died on April 27 aged 96. He was born on April 13, 1902.

AS AN actor, Godfrey Kenton's greatest gift was his voice, and he used it magnificently. Most at home in verse, he could sustain the great lines of Shakespeare...



Donald Wolfitt's King Lear. His versatility was revealed in roles such as the schoolmaster Ralston in Goodbye, Mr Chips...

IAN BELL

Ian Bell, CBE, diplomat, died on April 2 aged 84. He was born on August 21, 1913.



IT WAS typical of Ian Bell that on ending his time as Ambassador to the Dominican Republic he should write a book about the country...

of converting them into hotels and selling them as going concerns. He left Canford School at 16 and lived in France before reading modern languages at Oxford.

Tex Geddes, adventurer and island laird, died on the Isle of Skye on April 11 aged 78. He was born at Peterhead on October 24, 1919.

THE Special Operations Executive, set up by Churchill to run Britain's clandestine overseas expeditions during the war, had its share of colourful characters...

TEX GEDDES



because of his undoubted seagoing skills. His party piece in the SOE was using knives to play darts.

great characters of the Hebrides. A good storyteller, he was credited with the title of "sennachie" or bard by Margaret Fay Shaw...

PERSONAL COLUMN

Advertisement for Personal Column containing various services: TICKETS FOR SALE, HEALTH & BEAUTY, FLIGHTS DIRECTORY, ANNOUNCEMENTS, JETLINE, AVION, Jetworld, FARESAVERS, FLIGHTWISE, NBI YOUR WILL, THE COACHING SEASON, ON THIS DAY, NEW ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS.

NEWS

Lawyers condemn 'fat cats' list

Lawyers hit back at the Government yesterday after the Lord Chancellor published a "name and shame" list of forty barristers and law firms who received most from the legal aid fund last year.

The list showed that ten barristers were paid more than £400,000, one law firm received more than £8.5 million, and a further six were paid more than £2 million. The list was topped by Alun Jones, QC, one of the defence lawyers in the Maxwell brothers' trial.

The suffering of Mary Bell

The child killer Mary Bell discloses today that her mother tried to kill her and that she suffered horrific child abuse at home. She also recalls her late mother frequently telling her that nobody could be as bad as Mary.

Drug test positive

The Irish swimmer, Michelle Smith, 28, winner of three Olympic titles in Atlanta in 1996, has failed a drugs test and faces a suspension that could end her career.

Blair's first year

Calling for a classless society was a mistake by John Major. Tony Blair knew better and made us all New Labour. He even tried to rope the Queen into his new national chumminess.

World Cup warning

The leader of a French lorry drivers' union has threatened to cause traffic chaos during the football World Cup unless haulage bosses agree to demands for higher pay and shorter hours.

Coe urged to run

Sebastian Coe emerged yesterday as a surprise Tory contender in the race for Mayor of London amid rising alarm in the party over the candidacy of Jeffrey Archer.

School theft alleged

A Harrow schoolmaster who organised foreign expeditions for his pupils is alleged to have stolen more than £35,000 from the funds to pay his mortgage and children's school fees.

Distant voices

The distant ancestors of modern man, including the Neanderthals, were capable of speech as long as 400,000 years ago, about 360,000 years earlier than previously believed.

Baby safety warning

Mothercare cleared its shelves of two popular brands of baby-walkers yesterday after safety experts warned parents to stop using ten models.

Monumental change

Some of Afrikaanerdom's most sacred sites, including the Blood River monument, are to be given a facelift to reflect the part played by black people.

AI Fayed school bid

Mohamed Al Fayed wants to turn a school where Diana, Princess of Wales was a pupil into a centre for traumatised children. He has bid £2 million.

Police chief resigns

Belgium's police chief resigned yesterday over the escape of Marc Dutroux, the alleged child killer, as the Government survived a vote of confidence.

Benefits of television

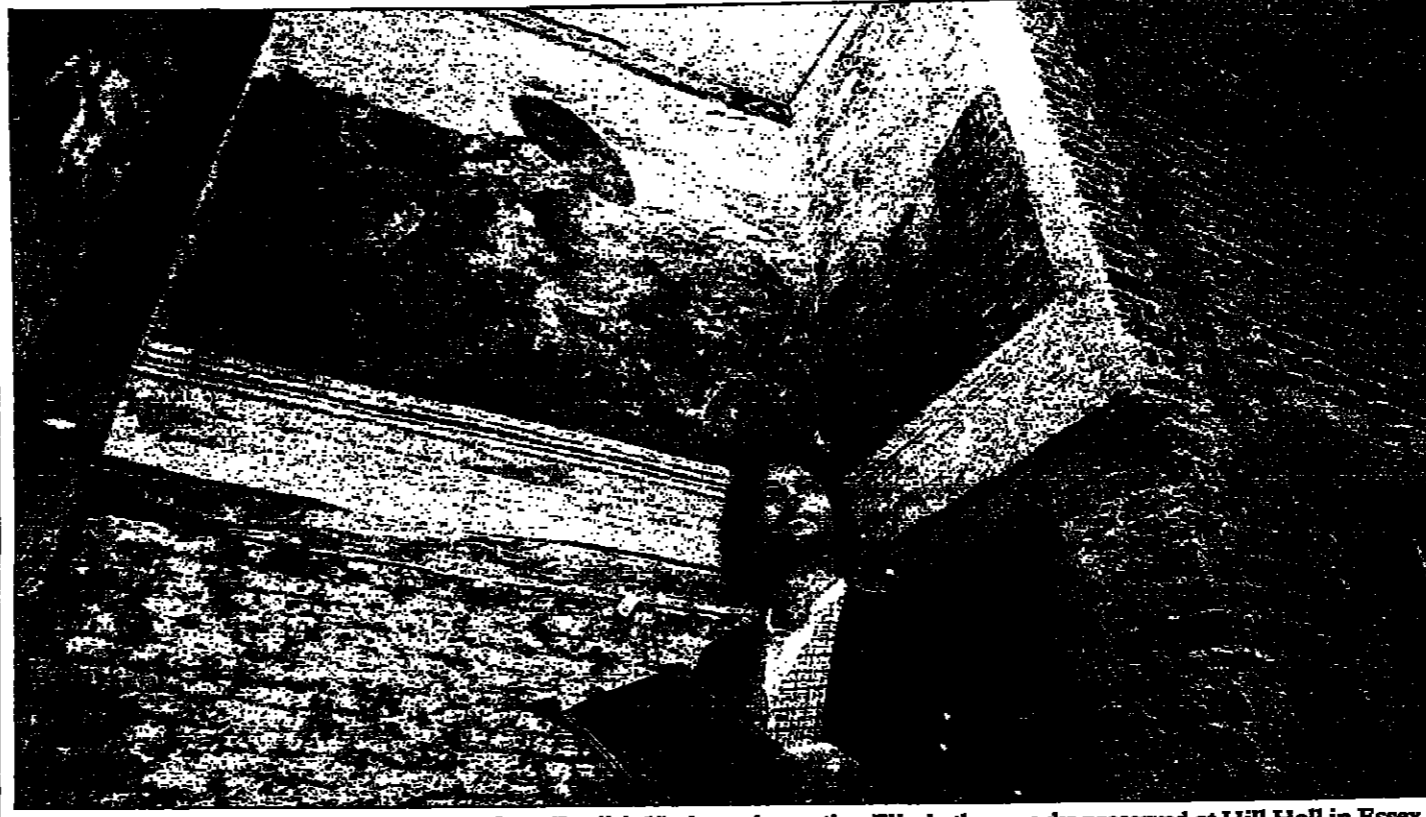
The shared experience of watching television provides an important "social glue", according to a study of 800 children on the island of St Helena.

Hospital experiments

American and Norwegian hospitals were involved in sterilisation experiments using radiation on the mentally retarded up to 1994.

Dentists face a change of drill

Toothpaste that will mark the end of fillings and the dentist's much-feared drill could be on the market in just over five years after a breakthrough by scientists at Guy's Hospital Dental School who have developed a vaccine against the bacteria that rots teeth. The development is the result of 25 years of research costing millions of pounds.



Adrian Heritage, a wall paintings expert from English Heritage, inspecting Elizabethan works preserved at Hill Hall in Essex

BUSINESS

Recession threat: Fears that manufacturing is on the verge of recession increased yesterday when new data showed business confidence has plummeted.

Selfridges flop: Selfridges, which is due to be demerged from the Sears group, looks set for a bumpy ride as an independent company after a fall in sales.

Kitmark to float: The British Standards Institution may join the stock market after agreeing to pay £36.5 million for Inspectorate, a company that tests oil.

Markets: The FTSE 100 was up 84.2 points at 3806.2. The pound dropped 0.13 cents to \$1.6685 and added 0.72 pence to DM 2.9956.

SPORTS

Football: The Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger says his team will be fully focused for the match against Derby County. Victory will take them to the brink of the Premiership title.

Snooker: Jimmy White's fine run in the world championship was halted when Ronnie O'Sullivan took a 7-1 lead in the first session of their quarter-final.

Rugby union: England faces expulsion from the international game. The world governing body has intervened in the conflict between the RFU and leading clubs.

Tennis: Players competing at Wimbledon this year will share prize-money in excess of £7.2 million, with the men's singles champion collecting £435,000.

ARTS

Open doors: Peter Howitt, best known for his role in the long-running television series Bread, is set for fresh fame as the writer and director of new movie, Sliding Doors.

Bronx Bard: A National Theatre workshop has been teaching the fun of Shakespeare to tough kids at inner-city schools from the East End to New York.

Danny boy: Daniel Barenboim tells Richard Morrison about his exhausting schedule, his future Wagnerian enterprise, and his epic Beethoven project.

Twist 'n' dance: Babybird preview songs from their forthcoming album at a London gig, while, in Norwich, Propellerheads get the audience on their feet.

FEATURES

Cries Unheard: "I had these little white socks on and just a little top and, um, a nappy, a nappy-type thing... and my mother..." she sighed deeply - "my mother would hold me, one hand pulling my head back, by my hair... and..."

The Times publishes the first extract from Cries Unheard: Mary Bell.

Building a future: Some big builders have stopped talking about "the house of the future" and have started building futuristic high-tech houses.

Stop the rot: Science has cracked the dry-rot problem: Windsor Castle is safe.

TOMORROW IN THE TIMES

FILMS John Hannah and Gyneth Paltrow in Sliding Doors: another Four Weddings?

BOOKS Roger Scruton calls time on Heidegger, Michele Roberts reviews Isabel Allende

TV LISTINGS

Preview: Robson Green is back on the trail of more serial killers. Touching Evil (TV, 9pm). Review: Joe Joseph on a case of cross-fertilisation. Pages 42, 43

OPINION

Double dutch

The pressure on the British presidency to manufacture a compromise this weekend over who heads the European Central Bank is considerable. Mr Blair is keen to oblige. He should not be too keen.

Open and shut case

Chris Patten is an inspired choice to chair a commission of inquiry into the future of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. It is to be hoped he will accept, the better to bolster a force under fire.

Forgiveness frees

The investiture of Keiko Holmes, who has worked tirelessly for reconciliation between British POWs and Japanese, is a mark of respect for someone who believes that we cannot only learn to forgive, but also to forget.

COLUMNS

PETER STOTHARD

Let me answer, too, those who feel full outrage at the payments made to Mary Bell by Gitta Sereny. Without those payments the book would not exist. The test lies in the book.

SIMON JENKINS

It is not hard to be efficient if you are taking over a successful plant and leaving it as is. A change of political leadership normally implies more than a change of cast. It implies a new play... looking back over the year, we can see that "government" hardly missed a beat with the Tory departure.

PETER RIDDELL

Tony Blair wants to play monetary union long. He has a clear view about what Government policy should be at the next election. But he does not want to declare his hand too soon.

CELEBRITIES

Jean-Francois Lyotard, French philosopher; Godfrey Kenton, actor; Ian Bell, diplomat.

LETTERS

Mary Bell's story; former Japanese POWs; newspapers and the Competition Bill.

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,778.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-26 and some pre-filled letters.

- ACROSS 1 Essential part of vegetable (6). 5 Help not automatically produced, by the sound of it (5). 9 Tree in which small monkey's finally trapped (8). 10 Copy English version of auto with hood half missing (6). 11 Love poetry, as found abroad (8). 12 What remains outside tavern in Eire, for example (8). 13 Channel Islands demanding reservoir (7). 16 Breaking record, I assert - coming back in triumph (7). 20 Bill a clergyman? That's right (6). 22 Too small now? Wrong, wrong, wrong (8). 23 It brings something nice - the end of hostility (6).

Solution to Puzzle No 20777. CAPABILITY BROWN... MYLEARNED FRIEND

Times Two Crossword, page 44

AA INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions. UK Weather - All regions. 0236 444 910. UK Roads - All regions. 0236 401 410.

Weather by Fax. Dial 0236 followed by area number from year for. UK Country 410 236. N. Ireland 410 241.

World City Weather. 153 destinations world wide. 6 day forecast. By Phone Dial 0236 411214. By Fax (india page) 0236 410232.

Motoring. Europe Country by Country. 0236 401 882. European fuel costs. 0236 401 886.

Car reports by fax. Send from your fax handset. You may have to let us receive mode.

HIGHEST & LOWEST. Yesterday's highest and lowest temperatures.

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING. Recycled paper made up 41.6% of the newsprint for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

OWPA logo and text: BEWARE OF UNDER COVER OPERATIONS. Western President Association. FRECALL 0500 41 42 43.

FORECAST

General: southwest England and southern Wales will be wet. The rain will peter out from the north in the late afternoon and evening. Central southern England will also have to be mostly cloudy with rain likely for a time.

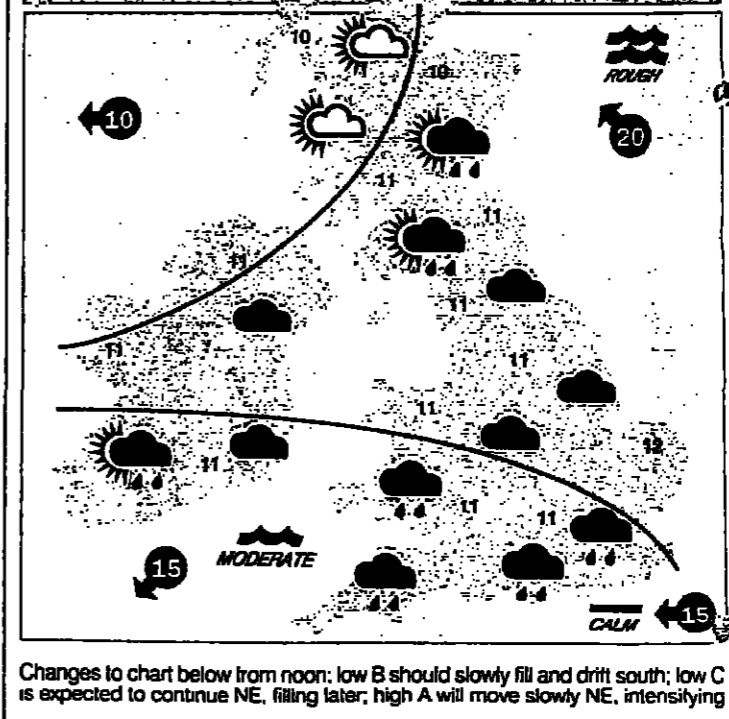
AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

Table with columns: Location, Sun, Rain, Max, Min. Lists weather data for various UK locations.

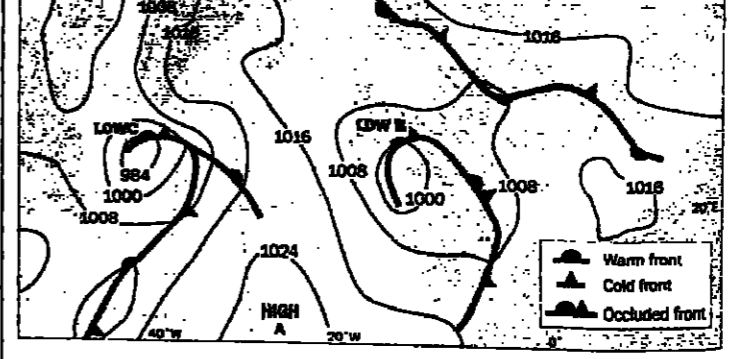
ABROAD

Table with columns: Location, Temp, Wind, Rain. Lists weather data for various international locations.

NOON TIDES



Changes to chart below from noon: low B should slowly fill and drift south; low C is expected to continue NE, filling later; high A will move slowly NE, intensifying



HIGH TIDES table with columns: Location, AM, HT, PM, HT, TODAY, AM, HT, PM, HT.

HOURS OF DARKNESS table with columns: Sun rise, Sun sets, Moon sets, Moon rises.

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Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page. Includes text like 'Perpetual call for board', 'Business on lowest level', and 'BSI sets n'.

THE TIMES

APRIL 29 1998

LISTINGS

Robson Green is back on more serial killer... (TV, 9pm) Review on a case of... Pages 42, 43

OPINION

dutch are on the British... manufacture a... weekend over who... can Central Bank... Mr Blair is... should not be... Page 1

and shut case

en is an inspired... commission of... the Royal... library. It is to be... the better to... or fire... Page 1

ness frees

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COLUMNS

STOTHARD

ower, too, those who... ge at the payments... sell by Gitta Sereny... The next lies in... Page 11

JENKINS

ard to be... of you... over a... planning... change of... normally... in... new... back... handily... a... Page 11

RIDDELL

it was... clear... that... not want to... Page 10

OBITUARIES

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INSIDE SECTION
2
TODAY



BUSINESS
Cool reception for unions at No 10
PAGE 27



ARTS
How Peter Howitt went from Bread to another role
PAGES 30-32



SPORT
Wenger calls for ruthless approach from Arsenal
PAGES 36-44

TELEVISION AND RADIO
PAGES 42, 43

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY APRIL 29 1998

RK

Investor considers seeking EGM

Perpetual set to call for Biotech board changes

By PAUL DURMAN

THE crisis at British Biotech heightened still further yesterday as Perpetual, the second-largest shareholder, said it was almost ready to press for management changes at the Oxford drug development company.

Perpetual's confirmation that it is considering calling a shareholder meeting to replace some of British Biotech's directors came alongside other signs of increasing anxiety among institutional investors. One senior investment executive, who has been in touch with several of the company's shareholders, said there was a clear question mark over Keith McCullagh, British Biotech's chief executive and driving force since it was founded in 1986. He said: "My guess is that the share price would probably go up if he stood aside."

Senior management at British Biotech were sufficiently worried about the possible misleading impression created by two upbeat press releases last May that they considered making a corrective statement to the stock market.

Senior scientists within the company were worried that the positive statements failed to reflect the main objections about Zacutax, the pancreatic drug, that had been received only a few days earlier from the European Medicines Evaluation Agency.

The scientists, including Andy Millar, met with Keith McCullagh, chief executive, and even discussed a draft press release. However, this was never issued to the Stock Exchange.

British Biotech only announced in February that the marketing approval of Zacutax would have to be delayed.

leading statements about marimastat are under investigation by the SEC. The company failed to inform the market about the five "major objections" European drug regulators raised about Zacutax last May — nine months before British Biotech admitted it would not receive a marketing approval this year.

The Stock Exchange has also reopened its investigation into share dealings by Dr McCullagh and other directors in January 1995 — after the company became concerned about the side effect problems of batimastat, trials of which were suspended soon after Dr McCullagh sold £600,000 of shares.

In addition, Andy Millar, dismissed last week from the key post of director of clinical research, has suggested he is pessimistic about the prospects of Zacutax proving itself an effective treatment for pancreaticitis.

Perpetual, the retail investment manager that owns 9.5 per cent, is dismayed at the company's failure to address the flood of allegations that have developed since last week when *The Times* first revealed British Biotech was under investigation by the US Securities & Exchange Commission. Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the company's advisers, had promised shareholders a comprehensive statement by today. But on Monday British Biotech said it could be some weeks before it was able to give a detailed response.

Bob Yerbury, Perpetual's chief investment officer, said he was disappointed by the prospect of a four-week delay

and wants more urgent action. He said Perpetual was looking at calling an extraordinary meeting to enforce management changes, along with other options. Mr Yerbury said Perpetual would decide what to do in the next couple of days. He said: "There are issues here that the company has got to answer."

The stream of disclosures have raised worries about British Biotech's handling of the price sensitive news about marimastat, Zacutax, and batimastat — its three most important drugs over the last four years. Its allegedly mis-

Investor anger stems from the amount of money British Biotech has raised from the City, including a £143 million share issue in 1996. The senior investment executive said: "This company has raised more money off the back of the chief executive's forecasts than any other company ever."

Some investors are worried that British Biotech lacks an effective counter to Dr McCullagh, who is known as an autocrat. But even some of those who want him replaced favour waiting for the statement.

British Biotech did not respond to either telephone calls or letters from *The Times*.

Commentary, page 25



Sears values Selfridges' store at £300 million, the same figure analysts put on the whole business

Sales fall spells gloom for Selfridges debut

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM
RETAIL CORRESPONDENT

SELFRIDGES, which is due to be demerged from the troubled Sears group this summer, looks set for a bumpy debut as an independent company after reporting a drop in sales.

Sears has revealed the Selfridges Oxford Street property at £300 million, up by £100 million. But analysts valued Selfridges as a whole at between £300 million and £400 million, considerably below the level Sears had hoped.

Selfridges sales were up 3 per cent in the year to January 31, depressed by a poor Christmas. In the new financial year they have fallen 2.5 per cent. Vittorio Radice, who runs Selfridges, said a fall in tourist spending and disruption to trade from a refurbishment programme, had hit sales.

Analysts say the timing of the demerger was poor, as the refurbishment will be finished next year, and a second big store in Manchester is due to open this autumn. John Richards, of NatWest Markets, said: "Next year would have been preferable. This is not a propitious time."

Sir Bob Reid, chairman, said the demerger would go ahead as scheduled in July, followed by the demerger of the Freemans mail order business in December. He was speaking as Sears reported a £15.7 million pre-tax loss, compared with a £68.1 million profit last time. This was mainly attributable to the £150 million cost of moving out of the shoe business.

Adjusted earnings per share fell from 4.3p to 4.1p and the final dividend has been maintained at 2.9p giving an unchanged 3.95p. The shares rose 4p to 59.5p.

Name dropping, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	5806.6 (+84.2)
Yield	2.82%
FTSE All share	2740.51 (+30.80)
Nikkei	15395.45 (+24.52)
New York	
Dow Jones	8937.57 (+18.93)
S&P Composite	1081.70 (+4.16)
US RATE	
Federal Funds	5 1/4% (5 1/4%)
Long Bond	4 1/4% (4 1/4%)
3-mth Interbank	7 3/4% (7 3/4%)
Life long rate	10 1/2% (10 1/2%)
LONDON MONEY	
3-mth Interbank	7 3/4% (7 3/4%)
Life long rate	10 1/2% (10 1/2%)
STERLING	
New York	1.6677* (1.6744)
London	1.6683 (1.6697)
DM	2.9948 (2.9980)
FF	10.0408 (10.0200)
SFr	2.4892 (2.4878)
Yen	220.93 (220.87)
£ Index	106.1 (106.0)
US DOLLAR	
London	1.7940* (1.7879)
DM	6.0110* (5.9835)
SFr	1.4829* (1.4828)
Yen	132.18* (132.13)
£ Index	100.7 (100.8)
Tokyo close Yen	131.86
WORTH SEA OIL	
Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$14.70 (\$14.50)
London close	\$87.59 (\$810.55)

* denotes midday trading price

Link ultimatum
John Prescott is to be told that the £5.4 billion Channel Tunnel Rail link to King's Cross/St Pancras is unlikely to be built unless the Government takes on at least £400 million of debt. Page 24

Merger talks
Jefferson Smurfit, the paper and packaging group, disclosed that JS Corp, its 46 per cent owned US subsidiary, was in merger talks with Stone Container, a US rival. JS Corp had sales of \$3.2 billion last year. Stone's turnover was \$5.1 billion. Page 25

Business optimism at lowest level since 1992

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

FEARS that the manufacturing sector is on the verge of recession increased yesterday after new data showed business optimism has fallen to its lowest point since the height of the last recession while the trade deficit has mushroomed to its widest level for eight years.

The uniformly weak figures revived calls from industry leaders for the Bank of England to clearly state that interest rates have now peaked in order to relieve some of the pressure on exporters from the strong pound. City economists added that they raised the prospect that some members of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee may even start pushing for a rate cut.

Sir Ross Buckland, a member of the CBI's economic committee and chairman of Unigate, said ideally interest rates should be cut at the next meeting but

"in reality, the best we can hope for is for rates to stay on hold and a statement saying they have peaked".

The stock market, however, failed to be swayed by evidence of manufacturing gloom, with the FTSE 100 staging a strong comeback after its 141-point fall on Monday. The FTSE 100 closed up 84.2 at 5,806.6 with investors concluding that fears of a US interest rate rise, which had triggered the plunge on Monday, had been exaggerated.

The Confederation of British Industry quarterly industrial trends survey showed manufacturing confidence touching its lowest levels since October 1992. The plunge in confidence was principally caused by another sharp deterioration in optimism about export performance, which hit an 18-year low, while export

order-books declined at the worst rate for nine years.

However, there was also evidence of a slowdown in the domestic economy with output growth moderating further and the prospects indicator at its weakest level since July 1993. Employment was broadly flat but expected to fall in the coming quarter, while inflation pressures remain virtually non-existent.

The separate trade figures showed the overall global deficit in goods and services for February widening to £1.74 billion compared with £1.61 billion in January — the biggest deficit since this series began in 1991.

Economists said a sharp rise in imports suggested the underlying deficit is set to widen further.

Commentary, page 25

Buyse to take over at Vickers

By ROBERT COLE
CITY CORRESPONDENT

PAUL BUYSE, who left BTR with a £1.1 million payoff in January, is the new chief executive of Vickers, the engineering company. Sir Colin Chandler, who is under fire for his company's handling of the proposed sale of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, relinquishes the chief executive's role but stays chairman.

Mr Buyse, a 52-year-old Belgian, was a divisional director of the BTR conglomerate before taking "early retirement". He is admired for the restructuring skills he showed at BTR and Vickers is committed to change, including the Rolls Royce sale.

Vickers did not say how much Mr Buyse would be paid. In his last full year at BTR his salary and benefits totalled £363,000.

Commentary, page 25

Turmoil at EMI increases with new resignation

By CHRIS AYRES AND FRASER NELSON

THE turmoil at EMI heightened yesterday when Jean-Francois Ceccillon, president and chief executive of EMI Records in the UK and Ireland, abruptly resigned.

His departure comes only days after the resignation of Jim Field, his high-profile counterpart in the US. After Mr Field's resignation, Ken Berry, head of recorded music, and Martin Bandier, head of music publishing, both joined the board. It is thought that conflicts between the new board members and Mr Ceccillon could have prompted his resignation. He will be replaced by Tony Wadsworth, head of Parlophone.

Speculation is mounting that EMI is in takeover talks with Seagram, the Canadian drinks and entertainment

group. Reports have also emerged that EMI is having problems raising £450 million for the spin-off of HMV Media Group, the newly formed Waterstones to HMV retailer.

HMV Media yesterday denied the reports, saying that the money had already been raised by Merrill Lynch.

The bank, which itself has been syndicating out the loan, has arranged for an extra £50 million to be raised as equity. This reduced the senior debt target with the aim of encouraging a broader number of institutions to take part. Merrill Lynch said yesterday that HMV Media wanted a greater diversity of subscribers so it could use them for various financial services.

Commentary, page 25

BSI sets new standards for its expansion

By CARL MORTISHED



Jeff Luesly, of Inspectorate, left, with Keith Tozzi yesterday

THE British Standards Institution is considering a flotation to further its expansion. The institution, created in 1901 to standardise the width of tram lines, currently operates under a Royal Charter granted in 1929 and yesterday agreed to buy Inspectorate, a company which tests oil and metals, for £36.5 million.

BSI, known for its Kitemark of product quality and the BS 5750 certification, makes money certifying products and testing everything from con-

doms to lottery machines. Keith Tozzi, the new chief executive, sees scope for overseas expansion, exploiting the BSI brands.

Surveys on the street showed 82 per cent recognition, and Mr Tozzi said: "It ranks alongside Coke and Rolls-Royce." But BSI was forced to seek permission from the Privy Council to obtain the powers to borrow funds in order to buy Inspectorate from Electra Fleming, the venture capitalist.

Mr Tozzi confirmed that the

next move for the institution could be a flotation. BSI has 22,000 members, mainly British companies, but they have no financial claim over the organisation's profits. "We will have to make a decision within 12 months," he said.

Inspectorate, whose chief executive is Jeff Luesly, will add £67 million in sales to BSI's £90 million turnover. Combined profits will exceed £10 million.

Commentary, page 25



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Collapse of drugs merger 'a £13bn disgrace'

By PAUL DURMAN

THE collapse of SmithKline Beecham's merger with Glaxo Wellcome was a "disgrace" that cost investors £13 billion, a shareholder told SB directors at yesterday's packed annual meeting in London.

immediately after the announcement of the merger at the end of January. But he said: "We would never have achieved that £24 billion of shareholder value."

Sir Peter said SB was "very disappointed" at the collapse of the deal. But echoing the account that Jan Leschly, his chief executive, gave to *The Times* last week, he said Glaxo Wellcome had broken the deal and left SB with no alternative but to end

the talks. In the most detailed formal statement yet, Sir Peter said: "Glaxo's conduct... led your board to lose trust and confidence in Glaxo Wellcome's intentions... Moving away from the fundamental principle of a merger of equals to one of a no-premium takeover would have destroyed rather than created value."

Sir Peter also disputed weekend press reports in which Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo Wellcome's chairman,

blamed the deal's collapse on rows over the management pecking order, exacerbated by pay differential.

SB was challenged on the £2.4 million paid to Mr Leschly last year, but Sir Peter produced a slide showing that this put him in eighth place among the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. He said: "That is the world competition we are up against." And with SB's share price having risen 35 per cent a year

since 1994, Sir Peter said: "He deserves it." To which one shareholder shouted out "very reasonable".

Shareholders were also told of SB's initiative to work with the World Health Organisation to eliminate lymphatic filariasis. This disfiguring tropical disease, often leading to elephantiasis, affects 120 million people. SB is donating its drug ivermectin free of charge with the aim of eliminating the disease in 20 years.

STEVE FORREST

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Balpa to offer TTG deal to membership

BALPA, the pilots' union, has shelved plans for a strike ballot among Britannia Airways staff over pay and job security after hammering out a two-year agreement with Thomson Travel Group (TTG). Balpa, which represents almost 80 per cent of Britannia Airways' 470 pilots, was considering industrial action in order to put pressure on TTG as it prepared for its £1.4 billion to £1.7 billion stock market flotation. Instead, Balpa yesterday met Britannia officials and will now put the deal to its members this week.

Roger Burnell, managing director of Britannia, said: "I am pleased that we have been able to work together with Balpa to satisfactorily address our pilots' concerns." Chris Darke, general secretary of Balpa, said: "Balpa has always wanted what is best for its pilots, the airline and its customers."

Merrill creates 500 jobs

MERRILL LYNCH, the investment bank, has announced plans to create more than 500 jobs over five years as part of its expansion in the UK. The US company, which last year took over Mercury Asset Management, the fund management business, is opening a number of sites around the UK. Merrill Lynch said the move was part of its aim to meet the growing need of private investors and the booming private banking market. Branches are being opened at Edinburgh, Newcastle, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester.

Loss for Utility Cable

UTILITY CABLE, the company that digs up roads to install cable TV ducts, plunged into the red during the six months to February 28, turning a £1.8 million pre-tax profit into a £3 million loss. The company disappointed the City last year by issuing a profits warning and in January there was a radical management shake-up. Turnover fell 40 per cent from £55 million to £33 million, while basic earnings per share of 0.82p turned into losses of 2.06p. There will be no interim dividend, compared to a payment of 0.27p last year.

New plant for BP

BRITISH PETROLEUM is to build a polyethylene plant at Grangemouth as part of a £500 million investment at the Scottish petrochemical facility. The plant will be able to produce 400,000 tonnes of polyethylene a year and will create about 100 jobs, with 1,200 construction jobs at peak. BP said that its Grangemouth investment, totalling £800 million to date, is meant to create the most cost-effective petrochemicals site in Europe. The polyethylene plant will be adjacent to a polypropylene plant to be built by an Elf Atochem/BP joint venture.

Fibernet in the red

FIBERNET, the provider of high-speed digital networks that floated on the Alternative Investment Market in 1996, saw pre-tax profits of £132,000 turn to losses of nearly £2 million during the six months to February 28. Shares in the company fell 38.5p to 30.5p yesterday, having traded at just 84.5p in January. Turnover rose 37.5 per cent from £3.4 million to £4.7 million. Earnings per share of 0.4p turned to losses of 5.3p, and no dividend will be paid. Fibernet said that its TANE network backbone had been completed.

Third Salvage warning

SHARES of Universal Salvage fell 20 per cent after the car disposal company issued its third profit warning in 12 months. The company said that it is still collecting the same level of write-offs from insurance companies, but raised 20 per cent less money for them in its crucial April junk auction. This will leave a profit of £1.6 million after a £250,000 charge for restructuring and a £100,000 loss on the sale of its car leasing business. The company said its profits recovery will be "gradual". The shares dropped 12.5p to 50p yesterday.

MY profits static

DIFFICULTIES in the industrial sector were blamed for disappointing half-year figures from MY Holdings, the paperboard and plastics packaging group. Pre-tax profits were £6.5 million, equal to last year, on a turnover of £47.1 million, up 5 per cent. Earnings per share were 3.44p, up 2 per cent, and the dividend is 0.85p, up 6 per cent. In February MY formed an alliance with partners in Italy, France and Germany, and John Monks, the chief executive, said the results did not reflect the progress made this half.

Advertisement

Government of Punjab Directorate of Civil Aviation

SCO No. 1068-69, Sector 22-B, Chandigarh, India. Tender Notice

The Government of Punjab is interested to purchase an executive version Helicopter for VIP use with the following specifications:

- (a) The Helicopter should be twin-engine (Turbine Shaft Engines) Air conditioned and IFR version. The basic design of the helicopter must be twin engine, it should not be modified from single engine to twin engine.
- (b) It should have dual controls for two pilots.
- (c) The Helicopter should be capable of carrying a minimum of six passengers and two pilots in the high summer temperatures which are upto 48°C.
- (d) The tenders should be from the manufacturers of Helicopters or their sole authorised sole Agents for India.
- (e) The helicopter should have the State-of-the-art Avionics System.
- (f) The tenders should specify any special financial package/credit facilities for their helicopter and the training facilities to be provided by them to the pilots, engineering and avionics staff. The tenders should also indicate about the existing servicing facilities in India. In addition to the above, the tenderer should furnish details in the format given below:
 - (1) Name of the Manufacturing Company.
 - (2) Type and Model of the helicopter.
 - (3) Price of the Helicopter (including all its components) in Foreign Currency and Indian Currency.
- (a) Whether deferred payment facility is available, if so, terms thereof, also soft loans and other options.
- (b) The date upto which the offer is valid.
- Seating Capacity:
 - (a) Passengers
 - (b) Pilots
- Type and horse power of each engine.
- T.B.O. of the engine, airframe and other major components.
- Radio and other modern navigational aids fitted in the Helicopter.
- Speed of the helicopter.
- Total Fuel Consumption per hour.
- Type of fuel used.
- Endurance and Range.
- Service Ceiling.
- Material of Rotor Blades.
- Number of Rotor Blades.
- Retractable Wheel type under carriage or fixed Skid type.
- Any other special term and condition.
- Helicopter must be fitted with ELT Transponder and any other equipment, avionics required by Director General Civil Aviation, Govt. of India, New Delhi for the issue of Indian Certificate of Airworthiness.

The tender shall be received in the office of the Director, Civil Aviation Punjab, upto 5.00 PM on 15th May 1998. The tenders received after this date shall not be entertained. The undersigned reserves the right to reject or accept any tender without assigning any reason what-so-ever.

R.S. SANDHU,
DIRECTOR CIVIL AVIATION PUNJAB.

Railtrack to give £400m Tunnel link ultimatum

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

JOHN PRESCOTT is to be told that the £5.4 billion Channel Tunnel Rail link is unlikely to go ahead unless the Government takes on at least £400 million of debt from the collapsed consortium.

The consortium behind the 68-mile project is expected to demand additional money from the Deputy Prime Minister before it agrees to take on

the beleaguered project. As negotiations aimed at saving the project enter their final weeks, consortium members admit that they are "nowhere near" agreement with the Government over funding for the scheme.

The collapse of the project under the current consortium would force the Government to begin the entire tendering process again, leading to at least two years delay. Already, the project is well behind its planned start date.

Mr Prescott is reported to be impatient that the main players behind the rescue package have not put together details for funding the project.

The consortium, now led by Railtrack, the track and signalling company, and Bechtel, the US civil engineering firm, has been given until mid-May to set out its final proposals.

Mr Prescott is believed to be upset that the consortium is unwilling to take on the £400 million debt equity incurred on the original bid to build the link from Folkestone to London St Pancras.

Railtrack has apparently made clear that its shareholders will not take on the debt, but Mr Prescott is under heavy Treasury pressure not to add substantially to the £1.8 billion State subsidy already promised by ministers.

Mr Prescott has told colleagues up to £1 billion extra could be needed to ensure the project goes ahead, although senior figures in the consortium believe this will be closer to £500 million.

The London & Continental Consortium behind the project plans to build the link in two stages, first from Folkestone to north Kent, and then under the Thames to St Pancras. Mr Prescott is irritated that the consortium is pressing for some of the £1.8 billion to be paid up front, instead of when the more expensive phase through London begins.

Rival bids to run Eurostar are to be submitted to Whitehall tomorrow, as the train service is to be separated from the construction project.

A consortium member, National Express, partnered by British Airways and SNCF, the French railway, are the most likely company to run the service.



Chris Brown, left, chief executive, and Anton Elsborg, finance director, of David Brown, which is reviewing its activities

David Brown considers disposals

By KATHY LIPARI

DAVID BROWN, the specialist engineer, yesterday reported a 13 per cent fall in pre-tax profit for the year to January 30.

Chris Cook, chairman, said the group's businesses were being reviewed to see which were capable of becoming "global leaders". It would consider disposing of

those not meeting this standard. Analysts said that it was clear that the oil and gas pumps business would be kept after the acquisition of Union Pump in the US.

David Brown, led by Chris Brown, chief executive, saw exceptional costs of £4.2 million associated with reorganising newly acquired businesses and settling a contractual dispute from the 1980s. These

cut pre-tax profits to £15 million, from £17.2 million in the previous year. Before exceptional costs, pre-tax earnings were £19.2 million, up from £18.2 million. Turnover rose 6 per cent, to £19.9 million. Earnings per share after exceptional costs fell to 17p (17.7p). A 6.3p final makes 9.2p (8.4p).

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S&N to shed 300 in rationalisation

By DOMINIC WALSH

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE, the brewing and leisure group, is to shed about 300 jobs in a rationalisation of its Scottish Courage beer division.

The company said yesterday it planned to cut its on-trade operations from six to four regional companies in a move that would save "in the millions of pounds". The trading arms to be closed are

losses will be largely managerial and administrative. John Dunmore, on-trade managing director, said the decision reflected the changing demands of multiple retailers such as Nomura's Grand Pub Company.

Analysts said the cost-cutting measures were in part aimed at clawing back some of the forecast £25 million hit from its new supply agreement with GPC, which is no longer exclusive. A spokesman for S&N said it was too early to say exactly how much would be saved by the measures, but it would give a breakthrough at its preliminary results in July.

Tempus, page 26

Japan's jobless rate at record

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S unemployment rate in March leapt to a postwar high of 3.9 per cent in March as the nation's economic woes pushed a growing number of firms to close or to cut payrolls.

The Government said that 2.77 million people were out of work in March, 310,000 more than in February. The jobless rate rose 0.3 per cent from February to reach its highest level since the current method of compiling data began in 1953.

out of staff by firms streamlining themselves to weather the economic slump. Government figures show that at the peak of the "bubble" years of inflated asset prices ten years ago, 300,000 workers lost their jobs through bankruptcies or restructuring; last December the number had risen to 600,000, and in March to 740,000.

A survey by a private research body shows that company failures began to climb sharply last autumn. In March 1,811 firms went under, 200 more than in February. Japan's jobless rate is still low by standards of other industrialised nations, but is expected to rise further, with no economic recovery in sight.

Insurers count the cost

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

SEVERE weather in the UK and one of the worst ice storms in Canada's recent history have taken their toll of the first-quarter results of two of the UK's biggest insurers.

General Accident and Guardian Royal Exchange both unveiled details of their expected losses at their annual meetings yesterday.

General Accident said severe weather, especially in Canada, will increase claims in the first quarter of 1998 by £30 million over last year's figure. It said the additional claims, together with strong competition, would reduce results for the quarter.

Lord Hambro, Guardian's chairman, told shareholders that, although the insurer does not report quarterly figures, the "atrocious weather conditions" that hit the UK in January and at Easter will cost a total of £25 million, while the Canadian storms would cost £12 million in claims.

Most analysts said the losses reinforced their belief that first-quarter results for 1998 for General Accident, due on May 12, will be below last year's figure.

However, the composite revealed that annualised new UK life business premiums had risen 25 per cent over the first quarter of 1997.

Shares in General Accident rose 13p to £13.23. GRE shares fell 2p to 394p.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

MANCHESTER UNITY LIFE INSURANCE COLLECTING SOCIETY: THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of this Society will be held at THE ROYAL FREE, 40 PORTLAND STREET, MANCHESTER, M2 2BQ on Wednesday, 21 May 1998 at 12.00 pm. Agenda: Consider and approve the accounts for the year ended 31st December 1997; Appointment of Auditors; Re-appointment of Directors; Any other business of which notice has been given.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 23rd April 1998 in the above matter is hereby confirmed. The Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 23rd April 1998 in the above matter is hereby confirmed. The Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated 23rd April 1998 in the above matter is hereby confirmed.

Five-fold rise by Alexandra Shipyard subsidies on way out

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

A FIVE-fold increase in pre-tax profits was announced by Alexandra Workwear, the industrial clothing supplier, yesterday. (Kathy Lipari writes).

Pre-tax earnings rose to £5.6 million in the year to January 31, from £1.1 million, slightly ahead of expectations, as operating margins improved to 9.6 per cent (2.9 per cent).

Turnover was up to £66 million (£65.9 million) after the disposal of non-profitable businesses. Earnings increased to 10.7p a share from 2.2p. The dividend is 4.5p, for a 7p total (6.5p).

Manufacturing moved from Scotland to Morocco to reduce costs and key management changes included Julian Budd to chief executive, John Jutsum to finance director, and David Dunn, chairman.

Shipyard subsidies on way out

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE European Union is expected to agree this weekend to abolish direct subsidies to shipbuilders, raising fears that jobs could be lost in British shipyards.

Exact details of the plan to end the subsidies remain to be agreed at next week's meeting of the EU Industrial Council in Brussels, but the Department of Trade and Industry expects the payments to be phased out by early next century.

British shipbuilders receive only about £18 million in subsidies each year, and the Department of Trade and Industry is confident that they will survive without the subsidies. The level of subsidy has been reduced from 28 per cent to 9 per cent of build costs during the past ten years.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.68	2.50	0.689	0.630
Canada \$	22.04	20.38	3.555	3.260
Denmark Dkr	64.87	59.81	3.17	2.93
France Ffr	2.52	2.34	13.06	12.12
Germany DM	0.63	0.60	319.12	287.09
Italy Lit	12.00	11.11	9.18	8.18
Japan Yen	9.83	8.88	265.51	248.72
Spain Ptas	16.50	15.32	13.72	12.82
Switzerland Sfr	2.21	2.11	2.64	2.42
UK £	1.00	1.00	4189.17	3899.93
USA \$	1.51	1.41	1.774	1.621

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
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Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

THE TIMES
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Jefferson
US subs
in merge
Homes boom
McCarthy price
UB is sweet c

Perpetual motion exposes tardy Biotech



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

The board of British Biotech has gone too far in demonstrating its contempt for those who own the business. Its indication that anxious shareholders would have to wait several weeks more for answers to legitimate questions has finally prompted Perpetual to launch a public fightback. If the fund manager's fears about the running of the company are not allayed almost immediately, it is warning that it will summon an extraordinary general meeting that would almost certainly live up to its name.

Prospects for British Biotech's drug portfolio are harder to judge, although the sacked former head of clinical research, is hardly encouraging optimism. But during their development, the outlook for new drugs is rarely black and white. Investors will not have confidence in the company to develop those drugs unless they can be convinced that they should have confidence in the Biotech board.

Perpetual deserves praise for coming out of the shadows from which major institutional investors usually try to exert their influence and demanding that the British Biotech board should be answerable to all its investors. Given the controversy which has blown up over the company as its share price has shrunk, it is incredible that the board should have thought investors could have been appeased by the terse comment that it would give a detailed statement in several weeks time.

Those who invest in the biotech sector take a gamble on products but they should not up the stakes by backing management which sees investors only as a magically tolerant version of the hole in the wall cash machine, happy to supply the money, no questions or returns asked.

The questions that need answering are clear and the answers should be equally apparent to the company. In essence, investors are demanding to know whether the company has actively misled the market and whether directors benefited from share sales made when they had information denied to other investors. The

optimistic assessments that filtered out about the effectiveness of its chemistry. Whether the shares can sustain even these levels will only be clear when the company comes clean.

Perpetual is right to insist that neither investors nor the market should be kept waiting any longer for the truth. McCullagh and his chairman will find they have a tough task persuading investors that they deserve continued backing.

Knocked down, but don't get up again

Perpetual's John Prescott will applaud the departure of Jean-François Ceillon from EMI. As chairman of EMI Records (UK), M Ceillon can take the credit for bringing the works of Chumbawumba to a wider audience.

Yet another high profile executive making a hasty exit from their company. The top tier of EMI seems to be in total disarray. Even its efforts to look pro-active by combining its retail chains with the Waterstones book business have been hit by difficulties which indicate a certain lack of confidence.

The company was already finding trading tough before chairman Sir Colin Southgate took the apparently perverse decision that he would take on the role of chairman of the Royal Opera House, just when it might have been argued that his company needed him most. Since then, however, the confusion over who is running EMI has been more worthy of a Whitehall farce than Covent Garden.

Sir Colin toyed with the idea of becoming non-executive but decided against it, despite the inevitable demands that the ROH will make on his time. He toyed with the idea of making

Jim Fifield chief executive but then dispersed with his services altogether, instead, incurring a £12 million bill in the process.

Now we are to believe that Ken Berry and Martin (referred to as 'Marty' in the last lurid-like statement from Sir Colin) Bandier can run things perfectly adequately between them.

M Ceillon, apparently, did not fit with Mr Berry's view on how he wants the music business run. Mr Berry's employment of his vivacious wife aroused the interest of *The Wall Street Journal* recently, inspiring one of the most colourful pieces to have appeared in that esteemed publication. The descriptions of parties on the Berry patio indicated that the music business is still very different from banking. Hence suggestions that it was M Ceillon's flamboyant style that caused EMI to decide that he should go have caused some wonderment.

backdrop for the figures due to be announced next month and adds to EMI's vulnerability to a bid. The suggestion that Seagram still has its sights on the company and its music catalogue continue to gain credence, despite assurances that Edgar Bronfman Jr is only in London to visit the businesses he already owns.

Kitemark needed for new BSI role

Like much in Britain, the British Standards Institution was sidelined by the European Union. Unlike most, it has found a new commercial role in quality and testing and can lay claim to own the world's most trusted trade mark.

Logically, it should soon move from not-profit body operating under a 70-year old Royal Charter to fully commercial quoted company. The catalyst is spending £36 million, much of it on tick from Barclays, to buy the complementary Inspectorate business. That required a behind-the-scenes deal, which the Post Office would envy, to allow the BSI to borrow for acquisitions. Such pragmatism, needing a nod from

the Privy Council, is welcome. But it shows how anomalous the BSI's status still is for a group requiring market discipline.

As soon as talk of a public flotation arises, however, you get the same sort of head-scratching that is now dividing the Royal Automobile Club. BSI's Keith Tozzi reckons his outfit is more like the TSB: no-one knows who owns it and members have no financial interest. That is not an entirely happy precedent. Giving a privileged few, such as managers, something for nothing and the organisation a pile of cash to squander is not ideal. At least BSI's change of status would be led by its ambitions.

For the sake of other bodies in like limbo, Mr Tozzi and his colleagues should develop a kitemarked British standard for conversion before they are allowed to float themselves.

Export blues

BRITAIN'S trade gap has been deteriorating since last summer. As a result, practitioners have noticed a rising trend in low-level insolvencies. Given a traditional floating exchange rate regime, this might be self-correcting. But the exchange rate is determined by a committee that sets interest rates on narrow domestic grounds and by foreigners grateful that sterling rates are not converging down to the euro. Expect these trends to continue.

Jefferson Smurfit US subsidiary in merger talks

By CHRIS AYRES

JEFFERSON SMURFIT, the Irish paper and packaging group, yesterday said that JS Corp, its 46 per cent owned US subsidiary, was in merger talks with Stone Container, a US rival.



Smurfit in discussions

The company, whose chairman and chief executive is Michael Smurfit, said it was in discussions regarding "a stock-for-stock business combination". It added: "There can be no assurance that such discussions will continue or will result in any definitive agreement regarding such a business combination." However, company insiders said a deal was likely.

world's largest newsprint maker - in which Stone holds a 25.2 per cent stake.

A merger of JS Corp and Stone would create the largest corrugated box packaging group in the US, with a 20 per cent share of the market. Analysts in Dublin said a deal would allow the companies to make significant savings by closing paper mills.

Last year, Stone's newsprint division, Stone Consolidated, merged with Abitibi-Price to form Abitibi-Consolidated, the

150p in March on merger speculation. Earlier this month, the company admitted that it could spend up to Ir£1 billion (£800 million) on an acquisition. It has also considered returning up to Ir£200 million to shareholders.

The company has suffered recently from chronic overcapacity in the paper and packaging industry, and reported a 25 per cent fall in pre-tax profits for the year to December 31, to Ir£150 million. John Conroy, an analyst at NCB stockbrokers in Dublin, said: "The benefit for the companies from the merger will be significant savings. It will also take out capacity and that will be good for their industry."

In the US, the packaging industry has also been hit by companies adding extra capacity in spite of subdued prices. Although price increases have recently been introduced, there have been delays this month to add \$40 to the current \$390-a-ton price of linerboard packaging. Neither JS Corp or Stone was available for comment on the merger talks last night.

Standard Life reduces DFS stake by two thirds

By FRASER NELSON

THE woes of DFS continued yesterday, after the furniture retailer admitted that Standard Life, its third-largest institutional shareholder, had sold two thirds of its stake.

The company said that Standard Life sold 66 million shares, reducing its holding from 4.9 to 1.5 per cent. DFS shares, which have fallen from 580p in the past two months alone, dropped a further 6 1/2p to 300p.

The share sell came days after DFS

issued its second profits warning in six months, blaming bad weather for a poor Easter, and issuing a warning of a decline in second-half profits.

Uno, DFS's much smaller rival, yesterday issued an upbeat trading statement saying that its 34 stores enjoyed "significant" like-for-like growth over the same Easter period.

It added that post-Christmas orders were above expectations. It shares added 16p to a high of 231p.

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Strategic review ends in resignations at Brierley

By KATHY LIPARI

BRIERLEY INVESTMENTS, the New Zealand investment group founded by Sir Ron Brierley, yesterday revealed its chief executive and chairman had stepped down after a strategic review of its operations.

Bob Matthew, chairman of the company for five years and a director for ten, admitted the market had lost faith in the current board and management and decided the best course of action was to resign. Together with

Paul Collins, chief executive, he was responsible for initiating the review six weeks ago.

The company, which has a 46 per cent stake in Thistle Hotels and almost 30 per cent of Istock, the brick manufacturer, has suffered a severe decline in its share price as a result of its exposure to Asian markets caught up in the recent economic turmoil.

Sir Roger Douglas, a former New Zealand Finance Minister, has been appointed chairman and the search for a new chief executive has begun.

Homes boom lifts McCarthy prices

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

THE boom in the homes market has helped McCarthy & Stone, Britain's largest builder of retirement housing, to lift the average selling price of its properties by 10 per cent, it emerged yesterday.

Pre-tax profits rose to £9.1 million, from £4.5 million, in the six months to February 28. The company said that it is now achieving an average £75,100 for its houses, against £68,500 last time.

Matthew Thorn, finance director, said that the company was profiting from its heavy investment in the South West and South East of England, where house prices were among the strongest in the UK. He added that the group is still facing considerable obstacles to the planning applications it makes for new houses, but said that viewing levels on its houses are still strongly ahead.

proving housing market to reduce its commitment to part exchange. In the period, only 16 per cent of new sales involved part exchange, against 34 per cent in 1997 and 50 per cent in 1996.

After margins improved from 38 per cent to 40 per cent, earnings per share were up 63 per cent at 5.2p. An interim dividend of 1p (0.66p) is due on July 1. The shares rose 4 1/2p to a high of 163p.



Thorn: investment pays off

TV plans at Leeds Sporting

By CHRIS AYRES

LEEDS SPORTING, the owner of Leeds United Football Club, aims to launch a regional sports and entertainment network which could broadcast pay-per-view coverage of pop concerts or sporting events held at the company's planned £50 million stadium.

Chris Akers, chairman, added that the company was still in talks with several leisure, property and media companies to help to fund the stadium development. Mr Akers also said that the company aimed to double the number of Leeds United season ticket holders to 25,000 by next year through a direct mailing to 300,000 people and promotions from about 30 large companies.

Leeds Sporting reduced its pre-tax losses from £2.3 million to £1.1 million in the six months to December 31, while turnover jumped 16 per cent to £13.6 million. Losses per share fell 0.36p (0.9p). There will be no dividend. The shares were unchanged at 19p yesterday.

UB is sweet on Delacre

By CARL MORTISHED

UNITED BISCUITS is in talks with Campbell Soup Company over the purchase of the Biscuits Delacre, maker of the Biscuits Delacre, Cigarettes Russes and Maison Delacre biscuit brands.

The deal is expected to be agreed within a month but analysts speculated that UB could face a rival bidder such as Bahlsen of Germany or Northern Foods of the UK. Delacre is part of UB's strategy to expand McVitie's

Group, its own biscuit business, by organic growth and acquisitions. Delacre had sales last year of \$180 million (£108 million) and UB said the deal would enhance earnings. UB is thought to be paying about \$115 million for Delacre. Michael Landymore of Henderson Crosthwaite, the brokers, said: "This is a very good deal for UB and fills out its strategy in northwest Europe."

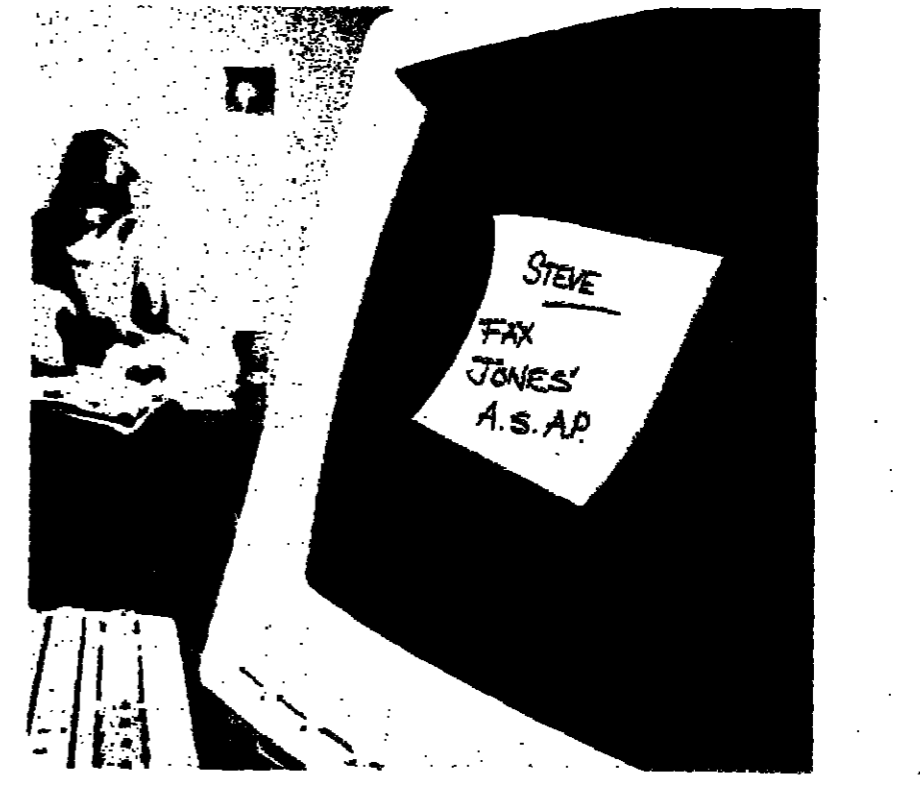
UB said that Biscuits Delacre would add to the

geographic spread of its biscuits business in Europe, enabling McVitie's to increase its share of the French, Belgian, Dutch and German markets. UB said plans to return £150 million to shareholders in July would not be affected by the deal. The company expects to receive \$100 million that month in part-payment for the sale of The Smith's Snackfood Company to PepsiCo.

Tempus, page 26

IF YOUR PCs DON'T WORK AS HARD AS YOUR STAFF,

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Maybe it's time your PCs really earned their chips. After all, your staff work hard enough already. So how about something we call the "Microsoft Solution"? It's a combination of Microsoft's Small Business Server (SBS), and Windows NT Workstation (NTW) for your PCs. The benefits? Well it's not just a simple way of linking PCs together. You can share modems too, giving cheap and easy access to the Internet. Every employee can send or receive e-mails which makes talking to clients, suppliers and each other much simpler.

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Time for debate to replace Eurocreep

There is a growing suspicion that the Government is covertly preparing the British electorate for the euro referendum by encouraging wide use of the European single currency by business — a strategy that has already come to be known as Eurocreep. The idea is that, once household names such as Marks & Spencer or ICI are happy using the euro in their day-to-day business, voters will no longer be scared and will say yes.

In itself, encouraging business to prepare for the single currency, in the same way as for the Year 2000 computer bug problems, is quite right. However, an attempt to use business as a Trojan horse to outmanoeuvre a still overwhelmingly sceptical British electorate and to act as a substitute for open and honest debate on the issue is quite wrong.

This is an enormously important decision, which should not be taken by default. Look no further than the ominous surge in support

for the Deutsche Volkspartei, a far-right party, in the eastern German state of Saxony-Anhalt in last weekend's elections. The DVU, which campaigned for job creation and against foreigners and the euro, was successful because it tapped into the fears of the young in a state with the highest unemployment in Germany.

The point is not lightly to invoke the obvious historical parallels, but to suggest that economic matters in Europe's future, as in the past, and that the euro, despite being pushed forward as a tool of political cohesion, will have huge implications for the economy of Europe. The euro may give Europe together round a table in the Frankfurt headquarters of the European Central Bank, but if the euro zone remains an area of mass unem-

ployment, true political stability cannot be assured.

The British Government must not see this issue as just another chance to hone its skills in spin-doctoring and clever tactics. This weekend's landmark meeting in Brussels, which will give the go-ahead to 11 countries to form the single currency, should signal the start of a proper debate in the Government about the euro.

So far, the Government's approach has amounted to little more than tactical vacuity to keep the issue out of the headlines and to buy time. Gordon Brown's five economic tests for whether Britain should join are masterly for their combination of sounding good and meaning nothing. Mr Brown wants our economies to have converged (sensible), for Britain to be flexible enough to cope with a

fixed exchange rate (absolutely) and to be sure that the euro will be good for British jobs, growth, investment and the City of London (who wouldn't?).

These tests now deserve examination. On convergence, the debate has focused almost exclusively on macroeconomics. There seems to be a naive belief that, as long as British interest

rates on their way down meet those of Europe on the way up, we will be fit to join. The Treasury appears to believe that it can engineer the timing of this crossroads and at least part of its irritation with the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee for not having raised rates more and sooner, and so triggered a slowdown earlier, seems to be based on a calculation of when Britain and the continental economies will synchronise.

Such fine-tuning is not an easy trick to pull off. Even if it were, there are huge structural differences between Britain and the Euro-11 that have hardly been mentioned. These differences go beyond far beyond the flexibility of labour markets, and include behaviour in the housing market, pensions systems and the culture

of business borrowing, to name but three.

On the flexibility test, Mr Brown seems to suggest that Britain has to be more flexible to join the euro. It is certainly true that a very high (some would say unattainable) degree of flexibility is needed to cope with a fixed exchange rate regime. Nevertheless, on this test, the Chancellor ought to go to Brussels this weekend and argue against membership of the 11. Alternatively, he and Tony Blair should be arguing for immediate entry for Britain on the grounds that this would lock in the competitive advantage of our flexible labour markets compared with the inflexibility of those in Europe.

Finally, Mr Brown wants to know whether the euro is going to be good for our economy — whether, put simply, the euro is a success.

In truth, it will be impossible to tell in 2002 or even 2010 and beyond. If Europe grows healthily, creating jobs and prosperity, will we ever know whether this happy state of affairs was caused by the euro or was because of, say, a benign world economic background? This is an economic experiment on a grand scale: the results are likely to take decades to analyse.

Joining the euro has always involved a leap of faith and that is true whether one joins in 1999 or 2002 or later. In Britain's deliberations on this subject, only two things matter. One is that the Government eventually decides what it wants to do, informed by political conviction or gut instinct, and leads the country to the same conclusion, whatever it may be. The second is that the electorate, when asked to vote on the issue, has been party to intelligent discussion of the implications. Tomorrow's parliamentary debate is a good opportunity to start airing the real issues.



Cloud on the horizon as Labour ties to the unions lose appeal

Christine Buckley on the prospects of a divorce for the two movements

Tony Blair was apparently not at his most comfortable on Monday lunchtime when a TUC delegation trooped into No 10. "You got the distinct impression that he didn't really want us there, that he would prefer that union leaders were not walking down Downing Street," says one official.

His unease could have been sheer frustration that both the unions and the employers remained as many miles apart as they have ever been over the vexed issue of union recognition. It could have been the sort of irritation often invoked by the visit of an elderly relative with whom one has long since lost touch and with whom there is nothing remaining in common except a difficult feeling of obligation. It could have been a mixture of both.

One thing is for sure — once the White Paper on Fairness at Work is published outlining the all-important criteria for union recognition, the relationship between Labour and the unions will be forever changed. Union recognition is the critical stage in what has been a very strained and distant liaison since Labour took office.

It was a salutary omen for the union movement that Labour's new *glitterati* were invited for drinks at No 10 well before the trade unions had a date in the diary. Publication of the White Paper, and its expected dilution of the recognition pledge, may be the time at which one or both sides might decide that a formal divorce is better than a relationship that is irreconcilable. The prospect of a severance between Labour and the movement that founded it may be the final rebaptism of new Labour.

The idea of a formal severance of the ties has been floated a number of times. Notably Stephen Byers, when he was Shadow employment spokesman, raised the prospect. While he and Labour moved quickly to downplay the notion the debate nevertheless set the tone that the party that was going to the general election was not hand in hand with its old paymasters.



A welcome for Meg and Noel Gallagher but Alan Johnson, bottom right, and Lew Adams, left, have found less favour

The next key signal came with a Fabian pamphlet written by Blairite union leaders Alan Johnson and Tony Young, who were then joint general secretaries of the Communication Workers Union. The pamphlet was never published after Mr Johnson became MP for Hull West and Hessle. Its arguments for more independence for the unions stopped short of recommending disaffiliation but advocated more political freedom to speak out on campaigns and, importantly, for unions to spend their money on their own campaigns. It argued that unions should consider not endorsing any party during an election.

The case for severance of ties between Labour and the unions could suit both camps. It could enable the unions to have a clearer and more uninhibited voice and could allow the Labour Party to once and for all bury the accusation that it is the political wing of the union movement.

Lew Adams, general secretary of Aslef, the train drivers' union, has spoken of forming a breakaway political movement if the unions were disaffiliated from Labour. A breakaway group would find favour with other unions who have been astonished at Labour's readiness to tone down the recognition cornerstone which most trade unionists had held sacrosanct. Some old Labour MPs who have

become increasingly disenchanted with the new Government and who have abandoned political ambition that forces backbenchers to obey the leadership unquestioningly may be tempted to follow.

The recognition issue could push Aslef, which has an affiliated membership of 14,500 with the Labour Party, to go for a vote on disaffiliation and party funding at its next conference. A spokesman says: "We would need to look at if we continued to provide financial support for the Labour Party if it took a patently non-union friendly position. We see recognition as the defining moment in its relationship with the unions."

A breakaway grouping would have the marginal clout of a marginal party. But many in the union movement doubt whether they currently enjoy more than that.

There are those, however, who fear that a divorce from Labour would leave the party and the Government open to the worse excesses of newness. Abandoning the Labour Party would, they fear, assign the working classes to the periphery. Ken Jackson, general secretary of the AEEU, the electrical workers' union, says: "The Labour Party has become increasingly professionalised and parliament has become far more professionalised. The union link is the link with the working people."

Sears engages in terminal case of name-dropping

Sarah Cunningham forecasts few tears at the retail group's demise

Sears, the retail group that once dominated Britain's high streets, has written and discarded more recovery plans over the years than you could shake a stick at. Its latest idea is not to recover, but simply to disappear.

The British Shoe Corporation, which used to sell one in four pairs of shoes in the country, has finally gone. Selfridges and then the Freemans mail order business will be demerged later this year. Sir Bob Reid, chairman of the group for the past three years, did not sound particularly attached to the Sears name when he delivered its results yesterday.

He said that the rump of the business — the Warehouse, Wallis, Miss Selfridge and Richards women's wear chains plus the Adams children's wear business — may well be renamed.

Although it will be an ignominious end to a once great group, its dismal recent history means that few would be sorry to see Sears disappear forever from the stock market.

Sir Bob's own indifference to the fate of the Sears name is not surprising. He has been attacked throughout his time there for backing Liam Strong, who was chief executive until last year, even when his strategy was clearly going appallingly wrong, and then for making up his own strategy on the hoof.

Unfortunately the worries of Sears's shareholders may not disappear as easily as the name. They are set to end the year with three shares for each Sears share currently held — in Freemans, Selfridges and whatever the rump of Sears will be called.

Yesterday Sir Bob said: "We have taken bold steps towards our goal of building three strong businesses with good growth prospects." But the fear is that, after all the fuss and cost involved in the restructuring, Sears shareholders will in fact be left holding shares in three rather small and weak businesses.

Selfridges is viewed as the most valuable business, with its huge Oxford Street property making it particularly solid. Unfortunately, the business is currently going through a very difficult phase.

The drop in spending by Asian tourists in London has hit its sales, while the continuing refurbishment of the Oxford Street store is also causing

problems. The result is that current like-for-like sales are down 2.5 per cent.

The refurbishment, which has been going on for five years will not be finished until the end of next year, while the second Selfridges store, in Trafford Park, Manchester, is not due to open until September, two months after its demerger.

"Selfridges is hardly going to get the best price," John Richards, retail analyst at NatWest Markets, said. Tony Shiret, at CSFB, values it at about £400 million — the Oxford Street property alone is worth £300 million — and said that he is confident that "Selfridges is a good story in the long term".

Freemans, which Sears has tried and failed to sell to both Littlewoods and N Brown, saw its profits fall last year from £21.5 million to £20 million. CSFB values that business at about £300 million and reckons that the women's wear business, which also suffered a drop in profits, will be worth about the same. The CSFB valuations of the three parts of Sears suggest it is worth 75p a share.

Others think that Selfridges is worth less and put the breakup value at nearer 65p a share. Either way, it leaves one wondering why the Sears shares, which bobbed up 4p yesterday, are still trading at just 59½p. Clearly, there are still enough doubts about Sears's plans to make investors wary. One concern is that Sir Bob is still promising to return some cash to shareholders at the end of this year.

The group has little cash available and so will have to borrow some. This will mean that Freemans and Selfridges will start their new lives in debt. As they will both be competing in an extremely tough environment, debts will not be welcomed.

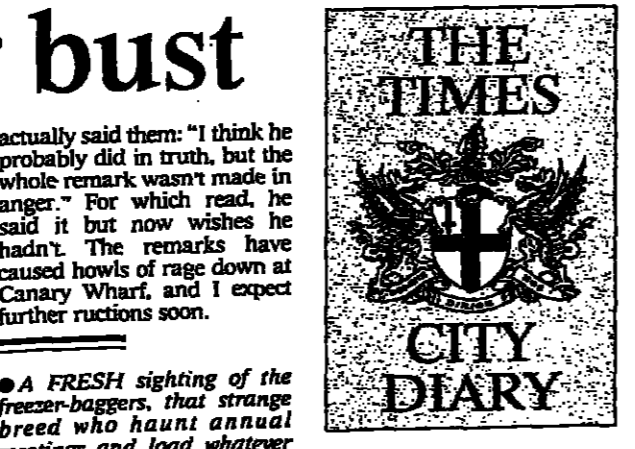
The main worry though is more fundamental than that. "Sears has a record of things going wrong," one analyst said. "Some of it has been due to circumstances, but a lot has been self-inflicted, and there have been few signs of contrition or apology." One way or another, the group has alienated almost the entire investment community. Its passing will not go unremarked, but it will be unlamented.

River bust

A NASTY row has blown up over Nick Raynsford, Minister for London and now standing about 23rd on the list of candidates for the mayor, if we get one, and some remarks he got one. And some property magazine made to the property magazine. The minister slammed off our friends at Canary Wharf, for using tax breaks to poach — his word — investment banks such as HSBC from the City.

The precise words were: "The London Development Partnership in the short term and the mayor in the long term will put an end to the poaching between City Dock-leader, a florid-faced type in his 60s, gave my man the slip after managing two buns. No proper food, but the rest of the party left with a couple of medicine cabinets full of free head and tummy pills."

● A FRESH sighting of the freezer-buggers that strange breed who haunt annual meetings and load whatever they can into carrier bags. The usual four were at SmithKline Beecham at the Barbican yesterday, although the ring-leader, a florid-faced type in his 60s, gave my man the slip after managing two buns. No proper food, but the rest of the party left with a couple of medicine cabinets full of free head and tummy pills.



Massey-Ferguson a few years back, it came as little surprise. Hoffman, of course, subsequently became better known as chief executive of Thames Water. But the end at Massey came when he was ushered into a room with Victor Rice, now chief executive of LucasVarity and not a man for compassion or spontaneity, even in so delicate a task. Hoffman quickly realised that he was reading from a prepared script. He peeped across the desk at the first line. "Good morning, Mike," it read...

● JOHN REED, chief executive of Citicorp, gave a rare interview, and an even rarer glimpse into the life of an overpaid, over-motivated Master of the Universe, to Fortune magazine on Citicorp's merger with Travelers Group. Both he and Travelers' Sandy Weill have no plans to retire, he says. "You know, I used to have a personal life. But this is going to be driven by the company." If true, then rather sad, really.

MARTIN WALLER

Sharp bird

A STAR is born. Hawkpoint Partners, "born from a combination of the businesses of JO Hambro Magan and NatWest Markets Corporate Finance," emerged for the first time yesterday to advise on a merger involving a couple of Manchester property companies. As the staff own half the company, the rebranding is to mark their new-found independence. So just what is a hawkpoint, then?

"That's a very good question to which I don't have the answer," says Graham Paton, associate director. Several other directors draw a blank, and it seems no one has thought to ask, from Sir Michael Richardson and George Magan down. Alton Irby, chief executive, finally comes up with the following. "It's a name that symbolises the partnership; a hawk is free, independent, aggressive, whereas point means, well, sharp, pointed." As a piece of entirely unscripted improvisation, a bravura performance, I think.

"I have a last-minute bid from an anonymous buyer"

International design competition

Preliminary notice of the publication of a call for bids in a selection process for four Expo.01 arteplages

Expo.01 is a Swiss National Exhibition project, a great festival scheduled to take place from 3 May to 29 October 2001. The exhibition, which will be held in the west of Switzerland, is to be sited on three lakes at the towns of Bienne, Morat, Neuchâtel and Yverdon. At each of the four exhibition sites (arteplages), a large structure (forum) will be built on the water. These sites, each clearly distinct from the others, will have a very marked design based on a particular theme: Bienne — "Power and freedom", Morat — "The moment and eternity", Neuchâtel — "Nature and artificiality", Yverdon — "The universe and I".

The total budget for the Expo.01 project is approximately CHF 1.5 billion. Public financing accounts for CHF 195 million and the rest is entirely financed by private investors.

The invitation to tender will be published towards the middle of May 1998 in the official bulletin of Swiss commerce (Schweizerisches Handelsamtsblatt) and the Feuille d'avis officielle de la République et Canton de Neuchâtel, as well as on our Web site (www.expo-01.ch).

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized in columns with headers for fund names, prices, and changes. Includes various fund categories like equity, bond, and international.

Business works with Airline Network. 100 leading scheduled airlines, with 800,000 discount fares to 1,000 destinations. Includes logos for British Airways and Air France.

FREE CALL 0500 747 757. OPEN 9am - 9pm 7 DAYS A WEEK. Includes a logo for the service.

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Continuation of unit trust price table, listing various funds and their corresponding prices and changes.

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page, possibly a signature or note.

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Equities bounce back

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
45.00	44.00	Alco Group	44.50	+0.50	15.2
42.00	41.00	Bevco	41.50	+0.50	12.8
40.00	39.00	Carlsberg	39.50	+0.50	11.5

BANKS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
10.00	9.80	Bank of Montreal	9.90	+0.10	10.5
9.50	9.30	Bank of Toronto	9.40	+0.10	11.2
9.00	8.80	Bank of Nova Scotia	8.90	+0.10	10.8

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

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11.00	10.80	Beck's	10.90	+0.10	13.5
10.50	10.30	Carling	10.40	+0.10	12.8
10.00	9.80	Labatt	9.90	+0.10	11.5

BUILDING MATERIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
15.00	14.80	Home Depot	14.90	+0.10	18.5
14.50	14.30	Home Depot	14.40	+0.10	17.8
14.00	13.80	Home Depot	13.90	+0.10	17.1

CHEMICALS

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12.00	11.80	Dow Chemical	11.90	+0.10	15.2
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10.00	9.80	Home Depot	9		

When Barenboim tackles Beethoven, he doesn't do it by halves. He tells Richard Morrison about his epic London project

One more Everest for Danny to climb

Man may have seven ages, and cats may have nine lives, but Daniel Barenboim seems to have lived through a dozen lifetimes. He was the Argentinian piano prodigy who held London spellbound at the age of 13, by which time he could speak five languages and play all the Beethoven sonatas. He was the handsome and brilliant young conductor who led the English Chamber Orchestra through its golden era. He was classical music's first superstar, his energy unlimited, his musical appetite voracious, his temperament mercurial, his ability scarcely believable.

Then, like some too-perfect Greek hero felled by inevitable catastrophe, he became the chief witness to the tragedy of Jacqueline du Pré. About those harrowing years of marriage and grief he has largely maintained a noble silence, in the face of some gross provocation. "Couldn't they have waited until I was dead?" was his sole reported comment on last year's lurid du Pré biographies.

That dignified stoicism has only intensified the music world's respect for the man.

And now? Still only in his mid-fifties, he has few Everests left to climb. His conducting career, which seemed to stall in his 14 years with the moody Orchestre de Paris, has soared since 1991 when he succeeded Solti at the Chicago Symphony and coaxed a little romance out of that ferocious ensemble. He conducts Wagner in Bayreuth most summers. And since 1993 he has run one of Europe's great opera houses: the Deutsche Staatsoper in Berlin. Even by the standards of the modern maestro, this is a full life. And then there's the piano playing.

Perhaps he needs these Everests, because he has just created a new one for himself to climb. Next week he will bring his Berlin Staatskapelle Orchestra to the Festival Hall for a remarkable cycle. In just six concerts spread over 12 days he will conduct all nine Beethoven symphonies and play all five piano concertos,

which he will conduct from the keyboard, naturally. Such a double-whammy has never been done in Europe before. It was done in Japan last autumn ... by one D. Barenboim.

What will such a cycle reveal, apart from Barenboim's prodigious talents? "That each Beethoven symphony and concerto really occupies its own world," Barenboim ventures. "It's the complete opposite of Bruckner, where you feel that the idiom stays basically the same through the symphonies. With Beethoven, each work creates its own idiom. The *Eroica* and the *Pastoral* could be by two different composers."

That emphasis on Beethoven's Promethean diversity was richly apparent in the performance of the Ninth

Symphony that I heard Barenboim conduct on New Year's Day in Berlin: it was both focused and expansive, thrilling yet intellectually coherent. It also pointed to another Barenboim concern: to reclaim Beethoven from the clutches of the period-instrument interpreters. They

tend to see Beethoven as the culmination of 18th-century Classicism, whereas Barenboim—influenced by his great conducting hero, Furtwängler—unashamedly starts from the other end, interpreting Beethoven in the full light of what Wagner did later.

"The preoccupation with period instruments is the latest example of a sort of anti-Wagner movement in music-making," Barenboim claims. "To play Beethoven while disregarding what came after him is artificial. Of course a masterpiece is to some extent tied to the era in which it was written; but it is also making a statement for eternity. My criticism of those who use period instruments is that they sometimes ignore the latter."

Barenboim also hates the "authentic" obsession with Beethoven's highly suspect metronome markings, notably in Roger Norrington's ear-popping interpretations. "Literalness is not enough. The speed in Beethoven is not an independent phenomenon; it



Daniel Barenboim with the Berlin Staatskapelle, the orchestra that will accompany him on his challenging journey through the Beethoven piano concertos and symphonies

Each Beethoven symphony creates its own world

should always be related to content. If you have a bigger voice, you will need more time to articulate properly.

"And Wagner was right: music is not only about being, it is also about becoming. In other words, the most extraordinary thing in Beethoven is how the music grows from nothing. Sometimes this requires the tempo, too, to grow out of nothing. Of course, there is a very clear distinction between a willful, capricious pulling-around of the music, and the subtle tempo changes that are the essence of the creative process."

Indeed there is, and critics have not always agreed that the ardently romantic Barenboim has stayed on the right side of that divide. "When I do complex pieces for the first time I want to squeeze every last drop out of them," Barenboim admits. "But with maturity and experience comes a sense of relativity, and that allows a more straightforward momentum. It's like when you read some complex literature for the first time: if you underline too many words, in the end nothing stands out."

It is impossible not to sus-

pect that, with the mounting of this colossal Beethoven cycle, Barenboim may be mustering his energies for one last, mesmerising burst before rethinking his life and commitments. To his unease about the future of serious music in general (he came close to resigning from the Staatsoper last autumn when the politicians threatened to slash subsidies), and his deep unhappiness about the demise of music education around the world, is allied a growing restlessness about his relentless schedule.

Retirement is probably not a

realistic option for the Barenboim psyche, but "down-sizing" certainly is. When I ask him how long he can sustain his amazing double-act as music director of two demanding institutions 5,000 miles apart, there is a silence of Wagnerian length.

"I shall be honest," he replies, finally. "I have to find more time to play the piano. I play too little to maintain the level that I want, and things don't get easier, physically, as you get older. I want three months each year for myself and my piano. How I make that time I don't know. I was

going to reduce my weeks in Chicago, but with Solti's death leaving such a big gap I feel that I actually have to be there even more."

If Barenboim is running out of steam, that would be understandable. After all, when he walks on to the Festival Hall platform next Tuesday, he will be returning to a hall in which he first played an astonishing 42 years ago.

Yet it is hard to imagine this man ever staying away from an audience for long. No sooner has he finished painting his picture of brawn-weariness than he is outlining his

plan to conduct all ten major Wagner operas in the year 2002, or to return to Buenos Aires in two years to play a recital marking the 50th anniversary of the day when seven-year-old Danny first tickled the ivories in public.

"Will you give the same programme?" I ask. "No chance," he replies. "I couldn't possibly manage all that difficult stuff now." But the twinkle in his eye suggests that he might give it a damn good try.

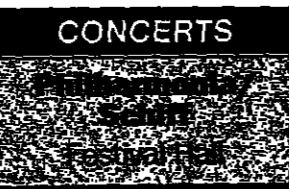
Barenboim's Beethoven cycle opens at the Festival Hall (071-960 4242) on Tuesday, and continues on May 6, 7, 15, 16, 17

Making a fine fist of Mozart

Andrés Schiff conducted Mozart from the piano with elegant finesse. They were not angry. They were the sort one shakes to emphasise a point, to goad, to cheer, to impress. They said everything about his robust approach to the mature concertos Nos 22, 23 and 24.

The players of the Philharmonia warmed to Schiff's lead: it was one of those rare occasions when an audience is privy to a live debate between director and orchestra, where listening is acute and every gesture receives a spontaneous answer.

The thought of hearing these three concertos in one sitting was not an altogether inviting prospect, but Schiff



took such pleasure in each that anticipation grew. The first, K482 in E flat, was the least settled, but Schiff shaped the long first movement with energetic intrigue. Not for him the pristine limpidity of Uchida, nor the brittle delicacy of the fortepiano style; his left hand was strong and sonorous throughout, his right soft-edged and free-wheeling, and his own cadenzas are the ultimate in good

taste. The Philharmonia winds were exquisite, in both this *Andante* and the following *Adagio*, and Schiff made a penetrating echo of their sound. Few in the audience could keep still in the breezy *Allegro*, punctuated with rumbustious trills.

Despite Schiff's unassuming entry into K488, he achieved a greater brilliance in this concerto. The stereophonic placing of the basses, two on each side of the stage, gave a strong harmonic foundation to some dynamic interplay between first and second violins. The strings excelled with glowing pianissimo in the yearning suspensions of the *Adagio*.

Most memorable was the

performance of the C minor, K491, that grandly symphonic score whose rhetorical opening is strangely revived in Brahms's First Piano Concerto. Schiff's first cadenza was full-blooded and the larger orchestra responded. Again, the Larghetto was marked by fine wind playing, especially from the articulate bassoons. Schiff and the orchestra kept their cards close to their chest in the *undemonstrative* opening to the *Allegretto*. It almost sounded half-hearted, until it became clear that Schiff was teasing us with the chromatic twists and turns of the sinuous line, before exploding into the forte.

HELEN WALLACE

Whose lines are they anyway?

ANY punter expecting to hear two Pogorelich play Schumann's *Toccata* at his Festival Hall recital on Monday night, as advertised, will have been disappointed. But not only did Pogorelich change the programme to include a Prokofiev Sonata instead, he even turned round the two halves of his programme without any announcement being made. Some people will have realised early on that they were listening to Chopin, rather than Rachmaninoff, but others will have been mystified.

Pogorelich raises such witfulness to an art form. Nearly all of Chopin's Preludes Op 28 were subjected to severe distortion in the name of "expressivity". The slow ones were dragged out painfully — or reinterpreted with creative insight, according to taste. No 4 in E minor, for example, almost ground to a halt, the pianist descending to self-parody in the final three chords, while the simple No 7 in A was invested with an ill-fitting profundity. One or two of the faster preludes, notably No 8 in F sharp minor and No 23 in F, were delivered with disarming artlessness and showed just what Pogorelich is capable of in terms of subtlety of touch. But for the rest, it was gravitas at all costs and a self-indulgence



that played havoc with any sense of structure.

Much of Rachmaninoff's *Moment Musical* Op 16 No 1 was given as an acutely introspective reverie. There was some impressively sustained and beautiful playing here, even if the full emotional range was curiously flattened out. Similarly, the three *Spanish Dances* from Granados's Op 37 explored their inner world of melancholy, even desolation, rather movingly, but only at the expense of the national colouring that is also intrinsic to these pieces.

Prokofiev's Third Sonata in A minor was by turns tempestuous and eloquent — a fair reflection of its content — and *Romeo's Farewell* to Juliet (from Prokofiev's own arrangement of his ballet) tugged at the heartstrings. It took a moment or two to locate the century of Pogorelich's encore. In fact, it was the *Sarabande* of Bach's G Minor English Suite, but dressed up not so much in the guise of Busoni as of verismo opera.

BARRY MILLINGTON

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

ADRIAN SPILLET

Age: 20

Profession: Student and percussionist, definitely in that order. Despite winning the 1998 BBC Young Musician award, Spillet, in his second year of a BMus course at the Royal Northern College of Music, wants to continue living life to the full as a student. "I love it here in Manchester. There's so much contemporary music going on, and I have five brilliant tutors."

How many instruments does he play? "Well, I focus on timpani, snare-drum and tuned percussion, but I have to study marimba as well. Marimba is my favourite."

How did it all begin? "I took up percussion at my state primary in Shrewsbury when I was eight, and by 13 my paper-round had paid for a drum kit." During his final year at New College, Wellington, Spillet won the Shropshire Young Musicians 9% Competition.

What next? "I'm supposed to represent the UK at the Eurovision Young Musician of the Year in Vienna in June. Then there's the family Prom with the BBC Philharmonic, some solo pieces in the college's prizewinners concert on June 27, and the RNCM's 25th anniversary concert at the Bridgewater Hall. Then in October I'll be going on a tour of the Middle East with the other four BBC Young Musicians."

After that? Spillet's award includes the Lloyds Bank Bursary Travelling Fund, and he hopes to use it to study Kodo drumming and marimba with Keiko Abe in Japan next year.

What about professional life? "I'd like to do freelance orchestral work eventually; that's where the money is."



HILARY FINCH

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CHANGING TIMES

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TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargre

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Neeme Järvi brings the Detroit SO to Manchester

ACROSS THE BRIDGE: Anna Cooper and Dasha Fedina perform in their own play...

CHICAGO: Revised version of the celebrated Kantor & Ebb musical...

THE DAUGHTER OF THE POET: Based on two of the Icelandic Sagas...

NEW RELEASES: THE BIG LEBOWSKI (18): The Coen brothers' delirious spoof...

BOODYCOUNT (16): Cast improves range with a set of an ordinary's aftermath...

HAPPY TOGETHER (15): Eddy, lyrical film about love and longing...

MONEY TALKS (15): Con artist and TV newsmagazine host...

THE RAINMAKER (15): Rourke lover Matt Damon...

tribute to the River Rhine, concludes the evening...

SCARBOROUGH: Alan Ayckbourn directs the play...

LONDON GALLERIES: Camden Arts Centre: Marie José Burke...

THE REAL INSPECTOR CALLOUS: A comedy inspired coupling...

LONG RUNNERS: Blood Brothers: Phoenix (0171-389 1733)...

CINEMA GUIDE: Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London...

U.S. MARSHALS (15): Full-on sequel to The Fugitive...

U-TURN (18): Luc, violence and greed in a small Arizona town...

CURRENT: DECONSTRUCTING HARRY (16): A witty, personal and professional...

APOLLO LARATS: Hammerhead (20th cent. film)...

DOCTOR DOLITTLE: THE MUSICAL EVENT. PHILIP SCHOFFER...

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and squawks. With A Number of Microphones they improvise a dance beat from a sound effects record...

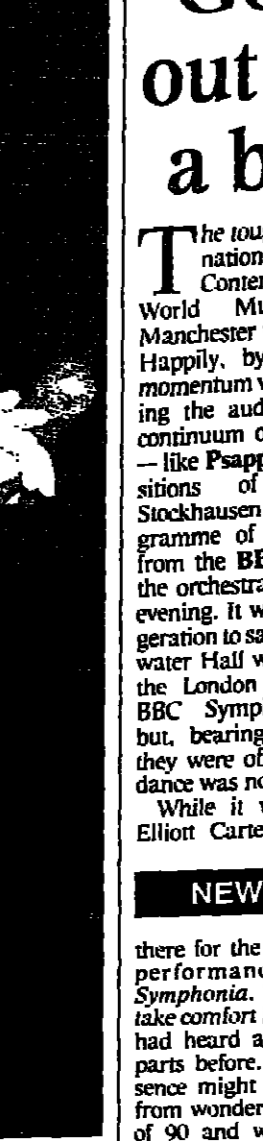
of a punter for not dancing. There wasn't much call for the dance police on this night.



John Street

DAVID SINCLAIR

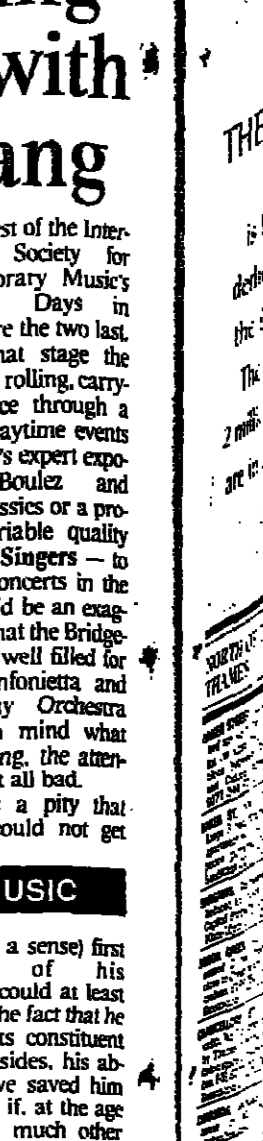
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ART GALLERIES: THE LONDON ORIGINAL PRINT FAIR AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

ART GALLERIES: GROSVENOR GALLERY DAVID GLEESON 29 April - 29 May

ART GALLERIES: THE WOMAN IN BLACK Adapted by Stephen Mallat...

ART GALLERIES: FORTUNE BO & CO, THE WOMAN IN BLACK, CATS...

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ART GALLERIES: VALDEVILLE THEATRE, *KAT & THE KINGS, *ART...

Various small advertisements and notices at the bottom of the page.

RUGBY UNION

England row threatens world order

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE negotiations between the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the leading English clubs, due to reach a climax this week, were given far greater urgency yesterday when the International Rugby Board (IRB) called both sides to account. In a strongly worded statement, the board reflected the general irritation felt throughout the international community with England's failure to keep its own house in order.

However, the pronouncement went further than that. England's continued membership of the IRB is placed in question — without recognition of the situation peculiar to England that has grown up over the past three years — and sanctions are threatened against any one of the board's 82 members that agrees to play against England's top clubs.

The immediate reason for the board's action is the impending appeal by English First Division Rugby (EFD) to the European Commission against RFU and IRB bylaws; the longstanding reason is the political dogfight, both within the RFU and with its own clubs, that has split over into the affairs of the other home unions and that the southern-hemisphere unions, mistakenly in some cases, believe has compromised the strength of visiting four parties this summer.

If certain people are not prepared to abide by the rules applicable to all the unions in membership, or try to effect desired changes other than through the democratic process within the IRB and their own union, then they have no place within the official structure," Vernon Pugh, the IRB chairman, said in a thinly veiled reference to the top 12 English clubs. "Nor has any union that accepts or accedes to such a challenge," he added, which confirmed that the ultimate punishment of expulsion from the board and the World Cup is the end of this road.

The RFU will be required to send a representative to an emergency meeting of the board in Dublin on May 18 to explain what is being done to resolve the present impasse. But even if the two negotiat-

ing teams come up with an acceptable compromise for the domestic game, that will not obviate the action being taken by the clubs.

Their withdrawal from the European competition next season is an additional source of grievance to such members of the IRB executive committee as Pugh and Ireland's Tom Kiernan. But the board statement also has the blessing of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, as well as the other eight countries represented on the board council.

"The rugby world outside England finds it difficult to comprehend why the problems caused by such a small group of individuals, whose declared intent it is to destroy the existing governance of the game, have not been resolved," Dick McGruther, chairman of the Australian Union, said. Such a stance follows to a tee the prognostications of Cliff Britton, chairman of the RFU management board, and Fran Cotton, when they claimed that the clubs intended to take over the international game to ameliorate their financial difficulties.

McGruther placed himself firmly in the Britton camp when he expressed concern that the RFU should even be involved in discussions with club representatives whose declared aim was contrary to the union's own constitution. Doug Ash, chief executive of EFD, suggested that the IRB statement showed precisely why the clubs have sought refuge in European law. "We are disappointed by the nature and attitude of the statement," he said. "The timing is unfortunate, bearing in mind the negotiations between the RFU and EFD teams to bring two years of impasse to an end."

Ash also pointed out that the French Federation and the French Government had agreed that their clubs required a sensible degree of freedom with which to achieve commercial targets and that the English clubs sought the same. "The reality of the European clubs' situation is different from other parts of the world," he said. "We are governed by European Community laws."



Bracken will return to the heart of the action tonight. Photograph: Jamie McDonald/Allsport

Bracken back for Saracens

By DAVID HANDS

KYRAN BRACKEN will hope to assist Saracens back to the top of the Allied Dunbar Premiership tonight when he returns to action against struggling Harlequins at the Sloop memorial ground. Bracken, who damaged his groin during the victory over Newcastle earlier this month, is one of three changes from the XV that started the 10-10 draw with Leicester at the weekend.

The England scrum half displaces Marcus Olsen while Tony Copeley, the former Wales lock, comes into the pack to give Paddy Johns, the newly-appointed Ireland captain, a rest. Brendan Daniel plays on the wing ahead of Richard Wallace. Should Saracens win, they will inch ahead of Newcastle at the head of the first division, but will have played one game more than their rivals.

Bracken's return does not imply that his other affliction — a nagging shoulder problem — is

resolved, however. Saracens have consulted their own medical staff and with England over the need to stabilise the joint but the ailment continues to cast doubt on his participation in England's summer tour to the southern hemisphere.

Wasps, who play Leicester at Loftus Road, will be without Shane Roiser, Kenny Logan and Nick Greenstock, while Leicester, who lost Dorian West (jaw) and Stuart Potter (ankle) during the game with Saracens, need to assess the extent of Richard Cockerill's neck injury.

Johns was named yesterday as the leader of a 34-strong Ireland party that will visit South Africa in May for a seven-match tour including two internationals. A key ingredient in his club's pursuit of the double, he enjoys a similar standing in the game to that of

Donal Lenihan, now the Ireland manager, when he captained his country from the second row.

Wales, whose party to tour South Africa is due to be named next Tuesday, have lost Stuart Davies, the Swansea No 8, because of a serious neck injury.

IRELAND TOUR PARTY: Backs: C Clarke (Trenure College), C O'Shea (London Irish), D Hickey (St Mary's College), J Topping (Ballymore), R Wallace (Saracens), J Ball (Northampton), R Henderson (Wasps), K Moore (Cardiff), K Maga (Bristol), M McCall (London Irish), E Ebered (Gwent), D Humphreys (London Irish), D Hegan (Trenure College), G Redburn (St Mary's College), B O'Shea (Cardiff), C Conboy (Cardiff), G Sheehy (Young Munster), R Conboy (Greyhound), J Fitzmaurice (London Irish), J Hayes (Shannon), P Wallace (Saracens), A Clarke (Northampton), B Jackson (Dorset), R Needelle (Newcastle), G Fisher (London Irish), M Galsworthy (Shannon), P Johns (Saracens, captain), M O'Kelly (London Irish), T Brennan (St Mary's College), D Conway (Bristol), V Costello (St Mary's College), A Foley (Shannon), A O'Donnovan (Saracens), D Wallace (Cardiff), A Ward (Ballymore), Manager: D Lenihan, Coaches: W O'Shea, D Parlane.

IRELAND: May 30 v Ireland (Wellington), June 2 v South-West Districts (Geelong), 6 v Western Province (Cape Town), 8 v Griqualand West (Kimberley), 13 v South Africa (Bloemfontein), 16 v Northern Transvaal (Pretoria), 20 v South Africa (Pretoria).

South Africans show interest in the going rate

THIS summer a glut of players — bought up in the frantic spending spree by leading clubs when the game turned professional two years ago — are expected to come on to the fledgling transfer market. With many players coming out of contract, clubs are looking to trim their bloated squads. There will be much blood-letting.

Yet it has not stopped many leading South Africa internationals from putting out feelers about playing here, among them such highly prized individuals as Gary Teichmann, the captain, Joost van der Westhuizen, Dick Muir and Mark Andrews. Their names have been circulated to clubs by the Sports Management Corporation, run by Maria Pedro, Jeremy Gustcott's agent. She said that they are keen to test the water here to see what they might be worth, if not now, then after the World Cup.

On the home front, it appears odds on that Austin Healey will leave Welford Road after apparently falling out with Joel Stransky, the Leicester backs coach, while Federico Mendez and German Llanes are expected to be made available at Bath.

Marked down

Guy's & St Thomas' Hospitals RFC — the world's oldest club, founded in 1843 — is smarting from probably the heaviest punishment meted out by the Rugby Football Union. The club has been docked 24 points by the competitions committee for having handed in three cards containing incorrect information about players. It has meant that, instead of finishing equal fifth in the London III South West League, they have been relegated to Kent 1. Two appeals — the latest last Friday — have failed.

Professor Stephen Chalcombe believes the punishment does not fit the crime of what he described as sloppy student administration rather than malicious intent. "This is a kick in the

teeth for student-based rugby in England," he said. Better news, though, for Camberley: they won their appeal against the deduction of six points for fielding an unregistered player and are assured of promotion as champions of the Jewson National League second division south.

Exiles on move

While we await the signs of white smoke over Twickenham, the indications are that 14-team divisions in the Allied Dunbar Premiership are a "done deal", with Premiership a "done deal", with play-offs to decide relegation and promotion. With Bedford and West Hartlepool automatically going up, London Scottish and Rotherham could contest the remaining two places with Bristol and London Irish, home and away legs to be played on May 20 and 24. London Scottish would be without Derrick Lee, Simon Holmes

and Ronnie Eriksson, who are due to tour Fiji and Australia with Scotland, leaving on May 16. Meanwhile, Tony Tiaris, the London Scottish owner, has floated the idea of moving the club lock, stock and barrel to Edinburgh. It somehow defeats the object of an exiles club.

World at her feet

The women's World Cup starts in Amsterdam on Friday with England looking to retain their crown: although with New Zealand competing for the first time, they might be hard pushed to do so. One of the aces in the Wales team, who meet Spain on Saturday, is the full back, Non Evans, who is also a television presenter for S4C. "I spend my time in the studio wearing make-up and then go on the pitch and get covered in mud," she said. "My mum is worried about me getting hurt, but as I'm so much more powerful than most of the other players it tends to be them who get hurt."

MARK SOUSTER



SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Inexperienced players are often caught out when a suit in which they are strong is opened on their right. It is almost always correct to pass and await developments. This example is from the final of the 1997 Bermuda Bowl, won by France.

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<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wolff</td> <td>Chemla</td> <td>Hanneman</td> <td>Perron</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1S</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2S</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3D</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Double</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4C</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S	Wolff	Chemla	Hanneman	Perron	1S	Pass	1NT	Pass	2S	Pass	3D	Pass	Pass	Double	Pass	4C	All Pass					
W	N	E	S																							
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1S	Pass	1NT	Pass																							
2S	Pass	3D	Pass																							
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All Pass																										

With the same shape and point-count but with "lower" values in the rounded suits, it might be right for North to bid One No-Trump over West's One Spade opening, despite the singleton diamond. But Chemla had excellent defensive strength, and so he passed, hoping to come into the auction later to get a penalty.

At the other table the auction started the same way, but North (Dick Freeman for the United States) doubled Two Spades for penalty. That was passed out, and went for 500.

Chemla did not consider

his hand worth a double of Two Spades, but when Three Diamonds came back to him he had an ideal opportunity to show his hand type — doubling showed his three-suited nature. Perron should probably have passed, when the defence would have taken five tricks, but he tried Four Clubs, on the basis that North was "bound" to hold four of the suit. Luckily for him, North was not 4-5-1-3, another possible shape, so he got out for one down.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

EU CHAMPIONSHIPS: In the European Union championships, held in Salsomaggiore, Italy, last week. Great Britain teams won bronze medals in both the senior and junior events. Seniors: Heather Hobson, Roy Garthwaite, Ted and Janet Latham. Juniors: David Bakhshi, Martin Jones, Graham Hazell, Jonathan Green, Paula Leslie, Suzanne Cohen, npc Liz McGowan. The teams events were won by Portugal (open), Holland (women), Italy (mixed and seniors) and Sweden (juniors). The overall trophy was won by Italy.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Sarajevo chess

It is encouraging that Sarajevo, once a prominent site for important chess tournaments, is once again beginning to host grandmaster level chess competitions.

In the recent international tournament held there, the winners were Kozul (Croatia) and Sax (Hungary) both of whom scored eight points out of a possible 11. Also competing were Kurajica, from Bosnia, Moir, from Slovenia, as well as a selection of players from Bosnia.

Adams wrap-up

The following game is the final win by Michael Adams from his convincing match victory against Jonathan Rowson.

White: Jonathan Rowson
Black: Michael Adams
London 1998

Roy Lopez

1	a4	a6
2	Nf3	Nc6
3	Bb5	Bc8
4	Ba4	Bc5
5	0-0	0-0
6	c3	c5
8	Bc3	d6
9	a4	Bg4
9	h3	Bh5
10	g3	Rc2
11	Nbd2	0-0
12	Re1	b4
13	Be4	Na5
14	Ba6	c6
15	d4	Bxc3
16	0-0	0-0
17	Bxc2	Nb3
18	Ra3	Nxc2
19	Bc2	Rc2
20	0-0	0-0
21	Be2	Nhe4
22	Rxe4	Bg6
23	Nee5	Ba6
24	Bxa4	0-0
25	0-0	Rc2
26	a5	0-0
27	Rc3	0-0
28	Rxc5	Rc3
29	Rae5	Rf2
30	Kf1	Rf2
31	Rf5	h6

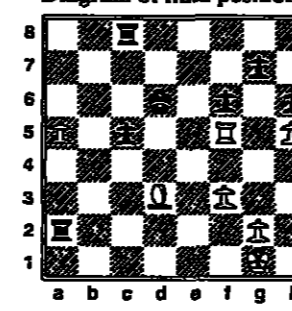
WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Botvinnik — Keres, Moscow, 1952. White's central pawn wedge guarantees him good attacking prospects on the kingside. How did he now make the most of these?

32	Rc5	Rc8
33	B	Rd8
34	Kg1	Rc8
35	h4	Ke7
36	h5	Kd6
37	Rf5	R6
38	Bc3	c5

White resigns



National League

The Four Nations League competition is for club teams with many prominent British players participating. International masters Jonathan Parker and Matthew Turner represent Midland Monarchs while Jon Speelman plays for Invicta Knights and Michael Adams and Tony Miles play for Slough.

After eight of the eleven rounds of the league, scores are as follows:

Times book

The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in The Times, and is available now from bookshops or from B. T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01376 321276 at £6.99 plus postage and packing).

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



RUGBY LEAGUE

Sheffield support failing to rise to Wembley challenge

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

WITHOUT a late clamour at the box office, Wembley will record its lowest Challenge Cup final attendance for 40 years on Saturday. The majority of an anticipated 10,000 empty seats are those belonging to Sheffield Eagles, who have sold fewer than half of their 14,500 allocation.

Wembley has been at capacity for seven of the past ten cup finals. The previous lowest attendance was 66,109 for the 1958 final, between Wigan and Workington. Whether through ignorance, indifference or the fact that Wigan are such overwhelming favourites, the Sheffield public has been slow to respond to the Eagles' achievement in reaching their first Challenge Cup final since the club's formation in 1964.

For the first time the Rugby Football League (RFL) has had to budget £25,000 to help to promote the final. Around 58,000 tickets have been sold to date. David Callaghan, the RFL associate media and marketing director, said: "We're looking at about 80 per cent capacity, which is similar to the situation in the Seventies and Eighties. It reflects Sheffield's situation as a young club in a development area which is still consolidating its support in the city."

Sheffield United's Wembley play-off ambitions and world championship snooker at the

Crucible Theatre are seeming by taking up greater interest. Mike Turner, the Eagles' marketing manager, said: "It's a problem selling rugby league in a predominantly football city. There's a big crossover with soccer support and those with Sheffield Wednesday season tickets, for instance, aren't going to miss amending their last home game on Saturday."

Turner is far from downhearted, though. "I'm quite happy with the numbers we're taking. We've a hard-core support that is building. Until we first appeared on terrestrial television last month, many people had never heard of us," he said.

Waisale Sovatabua has



Monie: in good position

ROWING

Searle chasing fourth title

By MIKE ROSEWELL

GREG SEARLE, of Molesey, could make history when he competes in the Wingfield Sculls from Putney to Mortlake today. In his first full year of sculling, Searle achieved a bronze medal at the world championships and, domestically, has won the Diamonds at Henley, the Thames World Sculling Challenge and the Scullers Head. A win in the Wingfield today would make him unique as no one has previously won all four events. He has three rivals to overcome — Peter Haining

partner, was impressive at the recent British training camp in Belgium.

Searle is favourite but his rivals have more experience of the Tideway and, as Wade Hall-Craggs, the 1993 champion and now organiser, said: "There are conditions that the others could handle better."

Searle, in fact, was not happy in the rough water in the Scullers Head, when he beat the much lighter Watson by only seven seconds. He admitted: "I need to develop my all-round skills. Ian handled the conditions better."

been included in Sheffield's 20-man squad after the Fiji full back avoided a ban for what was seen by the RFL disciplinary committee yesterday as a careless but instinctive — rather than intentional — high tackle on Ben Barton, his opposite number, at Huddersfield last Sunday.

John Monie, the Wigan coach, said that his team virtually picked itself in announcing the same one that beat London Broncos 38-8 in the semi-final. Nine of the 17 are new to a Wembley final.

"They are what I feel are the best players at the club. It's a good position to be going to Wembley in," Monie said.

Sheffield, Salford, Huddersfield and Bradford Bulls are to run coaching clinics to encourage more young people from ethnic minorities into the sport with the help of a £10,000 English Sports Council grant. Commissioner Ray Singh, of the Commission for Racial Equality, said that the RFL — the first sporting governing body to adopt an equal opportunities policy — was some way ahead of football in implementing anti-racist measures proposed by the Government's football task force.

WIGAN WARRIORS (vs Challenge Cup final, v Sheffield Eagles, at Wembley on Saturday): K. Radnicki, M. Bell, G. Connolly, D. Moore, J. Robinson, H. Fildes, A. Smith, A. Mestrovic, R. McCormack, S. Hodgson, D. Bots, S. Houghton, A. Farrell (captain), Substitutes: L. Connor, M. Cowie, M. Cassidy, T. O'Connor.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Swimming drug gets reclassified

DRUGS IN SPORT: Diuretics, for which four Chinese swimmers tested positive at the world championships this year, have been upgraded on the International Olympic Committee's banned list. Prince Alexandre de Merode, the IOC medical commission chairman, said yesterday that diuretics, or weight-loss drugs, are now in the same category as other agents that mask the presence of anabolic steroids or unusually high levels of testosterone. Insulin has also been included on the list of banned drugs, except in the case of diabetics.

GOLF: Helen Alfredsson, of Sweden, is to defend her McDonald's WPGA championship title in Europe at Gleneagles from August 6. Alfredsson, a four-time Solheim Cup player, will be joined by Laura Davies, Alison Nicholas, Kathryn Marshall and Joanne Morley.

TABLE TENNIS: Carl Prean will play Peter Karsson in the fourth round of the men's singles at the European championships in Eindhoven, Matthew Syed meets Jean-Philippe Gatien, of France.

HOCKEY: Barry Dancer, the England coach, has completed the selection for the World Cup tournament in Holland next month by announcing that David Luckes will be the second-choice goalkeeper.

NETBALL: A last-minute goal by Melanie Buck steered Middlesex to the inter-county championship title for the third successive year when they beat Essex Metropolitan 15-14 in the final.

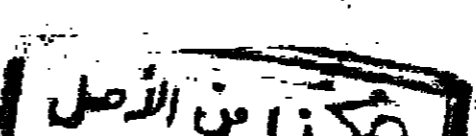
ORIENTEERING: Jenny James, from Sheffield, will test her fitness for the World Cup team by running in the Tionilla relay in Sweden on Saturday and the British relay championship on Monday.

WOOD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- POONAC**
- a. An oil-cake
 - b. East Indian trees
 - c. Red Indian smoke signal
- ZINGARO**
- a. An Amazonian tribesman's boomerang
 - b. A gypsy
 - c. An Italian pasta sauce
- SACATON**
- a. A chipmunk's cheek
 - b. A coarse grass
 - c. A wedge-shaped bone
- NUGGAR**
- a. A term of endearment
 - b. A flat-ended chimney brush
 - c. A large boat

Answers on page 42



Alan Lee, cricket correspondent, believes Stewart will have to keep wicket again

Secondary role may come hand in glove with captaincy

While the canvassing and speculating continue over the vacant England captaincy, one fundamental decision has already been made. Alec Stewart will once more keep wicket in Test matches this summer. He is also likely to lead the side, an appointment to be confirmed early next week, but even his dexterity has its limits and he will not bat regularly in the top three.

It is not Stewart's wish to keep wicket — he would prefer to open the batting — and nor is it in any sense ideal, but it indicates two alarming defects in the English game. Not only are there no all-rounders worthy of the name but now, it seems, there are also no wicketkeepers capable of meeting the modern credentials for Test cricket.

Throughout the 1990s, Jack Russell has come the closest, yet even at his best, his place was constantly jeopardised by the absence of an authentic all-rounder. Russell made runs, but seldom quite enough to compensate, and a Caribbean tour that, even allowing for the unforgiving conditions, exposed the deterioration in his wicketkeeping has surely ended his Test career.

Russell, 35 in August, cannot be expected to improve. He will be missed, for his good days were exemplary and his bad never less than interesting, but perhaps his quirks eventually became unhelpfully dominant. There will be widespread sympathy but, from the selectors' room, no mercy.

Within that selectorial chamber, though, this development has caused justified anxiety. The instinct is to cast around for a "proper" replacement for Russell, a full-time successor who would free Stewart to captain from his preferred batting and fielding positions. Such casting, however, gets no further than auditions.

Despite innumerable experiments, England still lack an all-rounder, someone who can bat at No 6 and take an equal share in a five-man attack. Ben Hollis will be the next, and one of the most promising, to be given a try, but it would be fatuous to expect instant fulfilment.

Even if Hollis plays with merit, the demands on a new wicketkeeper would be severe. Within contemporary Test cricket, there is no scope for a specialist wicketkeeper: he has to bat, too. England, like most other nations,

'There will be much sympathy for Russell but no mercy'

will not consider a wicketkeeper, no matter his quality, unless he can bat at No 7 and average close to 30. The trend has spread to county cricket and Glamorgan recently sacrificed Colin Metson, an impeccable wicketkeeper but a tailend batsman, for the extra runs of Adrian Shaw.

It was not always so. Bob Taylor, a consummate wicketkeeper but modest batsman, was the last to be blessed by more traditional qualifications. He won 56 Test caps, his position virtually unchallenged, but he says: "If I was playing now, I wouldn't get in the side. I was lucky to play all my Test cricket with Ian Botham, the last of the genuine English all-rounders."

"I could be picked as a pure wicketkeeper who made the odd score. That would be considered a luxury now. I only averaged 17. Jack Russell's Test average was 19 before the West Indies tour but he was still often left out because we weren't making enough runs."

Taylor, who now works for the Duke cricket ball company, does not dispute that Russell's time is up. "I think he has lost it somewhere, maybe become too

involved in his eccentricities," he said. He has reservations about further responsibility being heaped on Stewart but, like the selectors, can suggest no persuasive alternative.

"There doesn't seem to be the quality around that once existed," he said. "The selectors have tried a lot of 'keepers on A tours but the standard doesn't seem that high."

In Taylor's view, a confusion of priorities may be partly responsible. "When I was playing, I always said that I would lose sleep if I wasn't keeping well, because that was my primary job. Making runs did not worry me as much. It's gone the other way now and I think that has had an effect on the quality of wicketkeeping."

The England selectors, committed to the modern ethos of the wicketkeeper being at least the secondary all-rounder, take a contrasting view. David Graveney, the chairman, explained: "It's possible that the way they spread their time should change, because some spend their practice hours exclusively on their wicketkeeping and



Stewart's wait to be named captain is likely to end next week but with it may come additional responsibilities behind the stumps



therefore neglect their batting. Wicketkeepers nowadays have to do twice as much work as everyone else."

A study of the national batting averages for last season will have been little help to the selectors. Of the 18 regular wicketkeepers, ten averaged 27 or fewer — and this against often indifferent county

bowling. The highest averages, predictably, belonged to Stewart and Russell, closely followed by Rob Turner, of Somerset, and Paul Nixon, of Leicestershire.

Nixon, 27, was included on an A-team tour to India three winters ago, while Turner, 30 and a part-time stockbroker in Bristol, was the wicketkeeping stand-by for

England last winter. Both will rightly remain hopeful that their turn will come but the signs are that England are looking to the next generation.

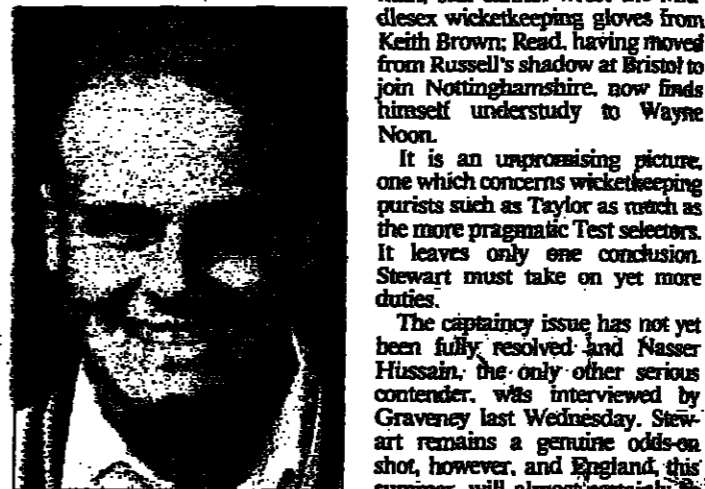
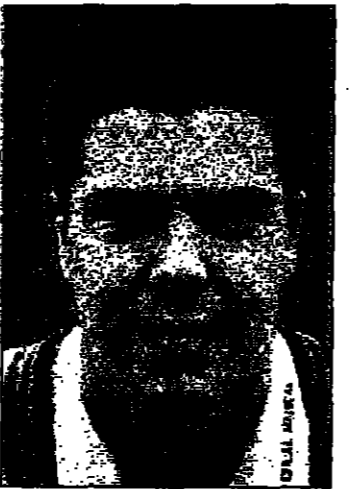
The two wicketkeepers taken on the A-team tour to Kenya and Sri Lanka earlier this year were both, in a sense, wild-card selections. David Nash and Chris Read are

both 20; Nash was not established in the Middlesex side and Read had not even played a first-class game.

"People criticised us but we have to look to the future and try to identify the right men," Graveney explained. Such efforts are not meeting with county co-operation. Nash, though picked as a batsman, still cannot wrest the Middlesex wicketkeeping gloves from Keith Brown; Read, having moved from Russell's shadow at Bristol to join Nottinghamshire, now finds himself understudy to Wayne Noon.

It is an unpromising picture, one which concerns wicketkeeping purists such as Taylor as much as the more pragmatic Test selectors. It leaves only one conclusion. Stewart must take on yet more duties.

The captaincy issue has not yet been fully resolved and Nasser Hussain, the only other serious contender, was interviewed by Graveney last Wednesday. Stewart remains a genuine odds-on shot, however, and England, this summer, will almost certainly be captained from behind the stumps.



Turner, left, Read and Nash, right, are three of the possible alternatives to Stewart keeping wicket. Turner, 30, was on stand-by for England last winter while Read and Nash, both 20, gained valuable experience with England A in Kenya and Sri Lanka

Victory aids Hollis cause

SOUTHAMPTON (Hampshire won toss; Surrey (2pts) beat Hampshire by 48 runs)

ADAM HOLLISOCKE yesterday rediscovered the Midas touch that deserted him in the Surrey made a successful start to their defence of the Benson and Hedges Cup and strengthen his case for retaining England's one-day captaincy for the Texaco Trophy matches against South Africa next month.

Chasing a target of 268, Robin Smith, the Hampshire captain, had threatened to decapitate Hollisocke with a searing straight drive off him that might have been construed as a return catch if he had not been so busy taking evasive action. And when Smith squeezed the next ball to the third-man boundary for his seventh four to reach 45 off 52 balls, Hampshire were 116 for two with half of their overs remaining.

Then Hollisocke pitched short and Smith, laying back to launch into his characteristic square cut, chopped the ball onto his stumps with an angled bat. Hollisocke raced down the wicket punching the air as though he had planned it all along. That was defin-

itely not the case, but his next significant act was deliberate enough and, as things turned out, quite decisive.

He batted back Martin Bicknell, who had already dismissed both Hampshire openers, Udal and Lane, in his opening spell and he took two more wickets in successive overs to remove the last recognised batsmen.

White, who had helped Smith to add 78 in 16 overs for the third wicket, flicked his first ball towards the mid-wicket boundary, where Ben Hollisocke took a running

catch in his stride. Then Keech was leg-before playing across the line to give Bicknell figures of four for 38. The next three wickets fell to the leg spin of Salisbury, and Ben Hollisocke finished things off in the penultimate over.

It had always looked as though Surrey had made too many runs for Hampshire, although their progress to 267 for eight was not as straightforward as they anticipated while Brown was making 43 out of 69 in only 12 overs for the first wicket.

They had run into unexpected

problems against Dimitri Mascarenhas, 20, who is London-born of Sri Lankan parents, brought up in Australia and recommended to Hampshire by Paul Terry, their former opening batsman, who spotted him playing club cricket in Perth.

Mascarenhas made an explosive start in 1996 with 16 wickets in two matches, but had such a lean time last year that his form so far this season has taken even Hampshire by surprise. He won the Asia League match against Northamptonshire on Sunday with an unbeaten 55 and now he surprised Surrey by taking four for 28 with his inswinging bowling.

He had Brown caught at mid-on from his third ball and bowled Stewart with his sixth. When he came back later, he had Adam Hollisocke and Ratcliffe caught on the boundary, Hartley, the veteran recruited from Yorkshire, also bowled well to take three for 32, with Renshaw, who claimed six for 25 when these teams met at the same stage last season, went for 69 in his ten overs. McLean and Udal took similar punishment as Thorpe and Bucher made sure that Surrey were not unduly alarmed.

SCOREBOARD FROM SOUTHAMPTON

SURREY		HAMPSHIRE	
A D Brown c Smith b Mascarenhas	43	S D Udal c Ratcliffe b Bicknell	13
A J Stewart c Bicknell b Bicknell	12	S J Lane c Bicknell b Bicknell	12
B C Hollisocke c Ayres b Hartley	13	G W White c B C Hollisocke b Bicknell	47
G P Thorpe c Ayres b Renshaw	48	*R A Smith b A J Hollisocke	45
M P Bicknell c Ayres b Hartley	67	M Keech bow b Bicknell	16
*A J Hollisocke c McLean	67	P J Hartley st Stewart b Salisbury	3
b Mascarenhas	16	A D Mascarenhas b Salisbury	14
J D Ratcliffe c Lane b Mascarenhas	4	W S Kendall bow b Salisbury	5
N Sharkey c Keech b Hartley	4	IA M Ayres not out	18
M P Bicknell not out	8	N A M McLean bow b C C Hollisocke	2
B C Hollisocke not out	22	S J Renshaw c B C Hollisocke	22
Extras (R 17, W 10)	27	Extras (R 5, W 9, NB 3)	17
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)	267	Total (48.4 overs)	219
F J Benjamins did not bat.		FALL OF WICKETS: 1-30, 2-38, 3-118, 4-137, 5-143, 6-149, 7-189, 8-172, 9-177	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-69, 2-70, 3-86, 4-181, 5-212, 6-220, 7-252, 8-254			
BOWLING: Renshaw 10-0-28-4; McLean 10-0-51-0; Hartley 10-0-32-3; Mascarenhas 10-0-28-4; Udal 10-0-60-0			
Gold award: M A Bucher.			

Collingwood inspires Durham

DERBY (Durham won toss; Durham (2pts) beat Derbyshire by six runs)

LAST year Derby was Misery-in-the-Dales, a hamlet where folk watched their backs for a sharpened knife, and whispered behind their hands in case there was a knock in the night. They are now speaking openly to one another, and looked a comradely bunch as they knocked up in their bright new blue and amber tags, but this defeat in the Benson and Hedges Cup will have hurt their pride.

Not many teams lose to Durham, and Derbyshire should not really have lost this game. It was a poor match. After heavy overnight rain had delayed the start, each side lost 14 overs of its innings when play began at 1.45pm; no batsman reached 50, and no bowler took more than two wickets. A day or two from now and not even Durham players will remember much about it.

That they were entitled to a modest celebration last night is due significantly, although not entirely, to the kind of innings, from Collingwood, that wins matches of this length. At the flag-end of the innings he came in at No 7,

and clobbered 30 from 18 balls.

Clobbered is about right. Last week he took a hundred off Warwickshire in the championship so it was a bit of a surprise to see him back until the final of the fifth wicket in the 32nd over, when he had no time for a sighter. At once he slugged Clarke over mid-wicket for six; though there was more delicacy about the way he reverse-swept Aldred, the medium pacer, not once, but twice for four.

Durham certainly needed somebody to say "boldness, be

rallying cry since he was appointed captain, broke his own rule, nicking a catch behind, and within an over, far more culpably, Rollins had drilled one to mid-off.

It became 58 for three when Tweets, getting his signals crossed with Barnett, ran himself out attempting a second to third man. Foster bowled Stubbings, a novice left-hander, and it was left to Barnett and Clarke to bring some sense to an innings that was fast losing its shape. In ten overs they added 65 and it was an immense loss when Betts hit Barnett's wicket with a full toss.

All now depended on Clarke and DeFreitas but Clarke, who had made 48 from two balls fewer, messed about on a second run DeFreitas quite rightly didn't see; and that was that. The task of making 23 from the last two overs was beyond them and Durham claimed only their fourth win against first-class opponents in this competition since they were given senior status six years ago.

British Universities and Northamptonshire were denied practice for their Benson and Hedges Cup assignments when their one-day friendly in The Parks was abandoned.

SCOREBOARD FROM DERBY

DURHAM		DERBYSHIRE	
J J B Lewis b Cork	47	*D G Cork c Speight b Betts	25
M J Foster b DeFreitas	9	A S Rollins c Morris b Wood	14
E Morris c Blackwell b Hart	21	T A Tweets run out	3
*D C Boon c Barnett b Clarke	31	K J Barnett b Betts	38
N J Speight b Harris	19	S D Stubbings b Foster	7
W P Speight c Harris b Clarke	4	V P Foster run out	48
P D Collingwood not out	30	P A J DeFreitas not out	19
J Bolling not out	2	I D Blackwell not out	2
Extras (R 1, b 10, W 4, NB 8)	23	Extras (R 2, b 10, W 11)	23
Total (8 wickets, 38 overs)	185	Total (8 wickets, 38 overs)	179
M M Betts, J Wood and S J Harrison did not bat.			
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-25, 2-82, 3-122, 4-128, 5-140, 6-182			
BOWLING: DeFreitas 6-0-25-1; Cork 8-0-21-1; Harris 7-0-32-2; Aldred 7-0-37-1; Bolling 4-0-22-0; Collingwood 4-0-22-0			
Gold award: P D Collingwood.			

Moody misses alarm call

HEADINGLEY (Worcestershire won toss; Yorkshire (2pts) beat Worcestershire by five wickets (D/L method))

BY THE TIME Worcestershire woke up, they had all but lost this match — not that struggling to rub the sleep out of their eyes is anything new to them. Last year they barely won a match of consequence before June. Perhaps they had spent so much time watching it pour at New Road that they were surprised to be playing.

Not that the rain stayed away entirely. There were three stoppages, the first after 45 minutes when Worcestershire were 33 for three carelessly surrendered wickets. Solanki pulled lazily to mid-on, a sormolent Hick dabbed a ball to slip and Weston was ambled a second run when Lehmann's direct hit beat him.

Worcestershire were no sharper when play resumed two hours later. They probably suspected it was not their day when Haynes was adjudged caught behind — by

ilton, who may play for his native Scotland in the World Cup next year, must have thought it was Christmas.

At 64 for eight, Worcestershire were in danger of recording their lowest one-day total, but Leatherdale and Newport raised them to a modest 128. The rain reduced the contest first to 39 overs, then 35. Haynes removed Vaughan and Byas cheaply, but Yorkshire reached their revised target with 15 balls to spare.

SCOREBOARD FROM HEADINGLEY

WORCESTERSHIRE		YORKSHIRE	
W P C Weston run out	10	A McGrath bow b Moody	32
V S Solanki c Parker b Silverwood	12	M P Vaughan c Solanki b Haynes	32
G A Hick c Byas b Gough	3	*D Byas bow b Haynes	31
*T M Moody b Harrison	4	D S Lehmann c Blythe b Moody	27
G R Haynes c Blakey b Hutchinson	4	C White c Solanki b Lampitt	27
D A Lestonbrake bow b Gough	4	B Parker not out	19
S R Lampitt c Byas b Harrison	25	Extras (R 1, W 2, NB 2)	10
RS J Rhodes c Blakey b Harrison	2	Total (5 wickets, 32.5 overs)	178
M P Bicknell c Byas b Harrison	2	D Gough, C E W Silverwood, G M Harrison and P M Hutchinson did not bat.	
P J Newport not out	28	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-17, 2-23, 3-32, 4-51, 5-58, 6-62, 7-64, 8-64, 9-108	
A Stanger c Hutchinson	3	BOWLING: Silverwood 6-0-16-1; Gough 8-0-32-2; Harrison 6-0-34-4; Hutchinson 4-5-28-2; White 7-1-28-0	
Extras (R 1, W 5, NB 5)	11	Gold award: G M Harrison.	
Total (8.5 overs)	128		

Floodlit frolics cast worrying shadows

EXPOSURE to great works is wonderfully cleansing; it purges the mind of all that is false and goodness knows, we inhabit a world that exalts the trivial. It is with relief, therefore, that Mr Rambler stuck up his hand for Wagner-duty last week and shared with R.G.D. Willis (Warwickshire, England) and in his dreams, Valhalla, an evening of ineffable splendour: Parsifal, four blessed hours of it.

It was a bit deflating, to say the least, to leave behind the Knights of the Grail and discover what cricket people had been talking about. Commenting on Sussex's best attempt to stage day-night cricket in chilly April, Brian Downing thought it was time "to give the people what they want".

Downing is not a man who invites mockery. He was once chairman of Surrey, chaired the marketing committee of the Test and County Cricket Board and holds that chair in the new order. He had a vision of where cricket should have gone, and could talk go. All the same, when anybody talks of giving "the people" what they want, it is wise to tread carefully. As somebody once advised: "Don't give the people what they want. They

deserve much better than that."

If giving people what they want was ever more important than striving for what is best, or anything that defies strict measurement, we might never have had St Paul's Cathedral (for what purpose is this cupola, Mr Wren?). Chekhov would have stuck to house calls, and Beethoven would have left a quiverful of arrows unfingered. It is precisely because the great and the awkward refuse to give the public what people think it wants that there is such a thing as civilisation.

Everybody — Downing, Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, Sid and Doris Bonkers, the Man in the Moon — knows what "the people" want. Louis MacNeice got it right 40 years ago in *Bagpipe Music*: "All we want is a bank balance, and a bit of skirt in a taxi." Where cricket is concerned, a Sunday slog on a Tuesday night

beyond their wildest dreams. Lord MacLaurin still seems to think he is behind his desk at Tesco to go by the language he uses.

Writing at the weekend about The Way Forward For English Cricket, and the kind of captain who might take us there, he admitted to looking for "qualities we would associate with leaders in business and industry". As Frankie Howard used to say: Nay, nay and thrice nay! In business you can come up with five-year plans and arrange everything down to the last comma. Cricket is a human game that fluctuates by the hour, dictated by something as fickle as the weather. It has absolutely nothing to do with any commercial enterprise.

David Lloyd, the England coach, had it spot-on when he was asked what England most needed to become a top side: "A bowler of blistering pace, a wrist spinner and more runs from the tail." Bat, pad and wicket, I'm afraid, m'lord. For all the fancy schemes to attract youngsters, emulation is the biggest spur to regeneration in any sport. The game doesn't need an army of researchers, with market strategies, but a few more good players. It's that simple.



MICHAEL HENDERSON

before a crowd of young people reared on football is the necessary bit of skirt. But to pretend that this kind of thrash fulfils a public need that is also good for the game, well, that is a different thing altogether.

Cricket needs to get young people involved, and the instant form of the game is an obvious way to get them started.

Downing may have half a point when he suggests that the game has not sufficiently considered the leisure time of young people. But talk of what the public wants inclines towards that glassy co-scientific "market research". Leaders should lead, not be led. Although cricket should reach out to the young it must never defer to them.

How the game's vocabulary has changed! There are now "back-up structures", "support systems" and "whatnot" all over the place. Soon, no doubt, players will be "empowered"

FOOTBALL: ARSENAL MANAGER CALLS FOR RUTHLESS PERFORMANCE AGAINST DERBY TONIGHT

Wenger keeps cool as history beckons

By Matt Dickinson
A SIGN in the bar of the country hotel that is Arsenal's midweek retreat informs customers that they serve up doubles. As Arsène Wenger sat down there yesterday, someone thought about pointing it out, but then thought better of it. The Frenchman did not seem in the mood for frivolous asides.

TITLE RUN-IN table with columns for Team, P, W, D, L, A, Pts. Arsenal leads with 21 wins, 11 draws, 1 loss, 46 goals scored, 17 conceded, 65 points.

see their adopted country as some brief, and lucrative, stopover. Wenger, whose love of English customs saw him being yesterday's press conference by suggesting "a chat about the weather", is working to a long-term plan.



Wenger knows how easily success can slip from the grasp

There is serious business at hand and Wenger, while remaining his usual composed self, will not be deflected. The league and FA Cup double — a feat achieved only five times this century — beckons and the Arsenal manager knows how easily success can slip from the grasp. "Now we must finish it off," he said, "and be ruthless."

hands. We don't have to look around at anyone else." If there is an oppressive weight of expectation from the supporters, Wenger also admits that he is toiling under the burden of history at a club that has been crowned champions ten times, including the double in 1971. "At some clubs, success is accidental," he said, "but at Arsenal it is compulsory. There is a history of success."

With the exception of Ian Wright, who successfully completed an hour for the reserves on Monday night and could be in first-team contention on Sunday for the first time in three months, the Premier League leaders will be at full strength. Dennis Bergkamp missed that 3-0 routing, and the Dutchman's recent form inspired another eulogy from his manager yesterday. "People forget how hard he works for the team," Wenger said. "That is what I admire the most in him. You can't have luxury players at the highest level these days."

Dalglish tries to rouse Newcastle survival instinct



Gillespie ankle injury

By Russell Kempson
IT IS the silly season on Tyneside, with any European player who can kick a ball apparently being linked with a summer move to Newcastle United. Kenny Dalglish, the manager, continues to make not-so-discreet pre-emptive strikes on the continental market despite the fact that the grade of football he can offer his prospective purchases — FA Carling Premiership or Nationwide League — is still a matter of some dispute.

three from their visit to Leicester City this evening, they could yet be joining Crystal Palace in the first division. Dalglish's worries include the condition of Keith Gillespie, the Northern Ireland winger, who damaged ankle ligaments when he fell onto the cinder track surrounding the pitch during the 2-0 defeat against Tottenham Hotspur at White Hart Lane on Saturday. He is unlikely to play tonight but should recover in time for Wembley.

for next season. "If we win our last three games, we've got a chance of getting into Europe," Emile Heskey, their powerful striker, said yesterday. "That would be a great way to end the season." Chelsea will be without Gianfranco Zola, their Italian striker, after they play Blackburn Rovers at Stamford Bridge tonight. He sustained a groin injury in the 4-1 win against Liverpool on Saturday. Coventry City take on Wimbledon at Highfield Road and, for the first time in years, can relax in an end-of-season fixture. Their usual fears of relegation were banished weeks ago.

to a drugs test. He also admitted to having a drug problem and was ordered to undergo a three-month period of rehabilitation and assessment. Mark Goldberg, the prospective new owner of Crystal Palace, is to sell his £20 million worth of shares in MSB International, the recruitment company. He needs the money to complete his protracted takeover of the club, which will include the arrival of Terry Venables, the former England coach, at Selhurst Park.

BASEBALL
NATIONAL LEAGUE: New York Mets 3 Houston 4; Cincinnati 3 Philadelphia 1; St Louis 7 Montreal 4; Colorado 4 Florida 3 (10 innings); Atlanta 3 Detroit 2; Milwaukee 3 (10 innings); San Diego 1 Chicago 2; San Francisco 0 Pittsburgh 5.

CRICKET
BENSON AND HEDGES CUP: Thurston: Somerset v Kent. No play, rain. Match abandoned.
ONE-DAY MATCH: The Parks: British Universities v Northamptonshire. No play, rain.

FOOTBALL
SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Southend 1 Cambridge Utd 1.
Monday's late results: FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Crystal Palace 0 Manchester United 1.

NETBALL
INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Final: Middlesex 15 Essex Metropolitan 14 (at Bourneville).
REAL TENNIS
HOLYOFT: British women's open championship: Quarter-finals: S Jones (GB) vs A Garrard (GB) 6-2, 6-1; K Allen (GB) vs J Daubney (Aus) 1-6, 6-2, 6-5.

TENNIS
MUNICH: BMW Open: First round: J Brinkmann (Swe) vs A Meibohm (Ger) 2-6, 6-4, 6-2; G. Gaudio (Ita) vs S Sanguinetti (GB) 7-6, 7-6, 6-3; C. Panatta (Ita) vs S. Simonini (Ita) 7-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Advertisement for 'COMPANY GOLF DAYS RESULTS' featuring Citroën and Golf. Includes a list of winners and prizes, such as a BMW 5 Series for the winner of the 3 APR BANKER ASSOCIATES event.

FOR THE RECORD
LEAGUE OF WALES: Rhylander 2 Bangor 0.
SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Southend 1 Cambridge Utd 1.
Monday's late results: FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Crystal Palace 0 Manchester United 1.

NETBALL
INTER-COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Final: Middlesex 15 Essex Metropolitan 14 (at Bourneville).
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HOLYOFT: British women's open championship: Quarter-finals: S Jones (GB) vs A Garrard (GB) 6-2, 6-1; K Allen (GB) vs J Daubney (Aus) 1-6, 6-2, 6-5.

Jimmy's chance to rewrite our love story

Jimmy White will not win the Embassy world snooker championship. I can't tell you how much of a heel I feel for writing that. I can't tell you how much fun it would be to be proved wrong. I really don't think he can do it — but it would be rather fun, wouldn't it?



Midweek View

There are snooker players called James or Jim, but White is a Jimmy. Boyish and beloved, he has a gift for attracting love. Partly because of the swash and buckle that has always been a part of his game, partly because of his air of helplessness.

schooling himself for near greatness, convict pallor and fag end glowing like a ruby in his 14-year-old face. And I remember his first losing final years later in 1984. After day one, he was so far behind I thought twice about catching the train to Sheffield. But I did and so I was able to watch one of the greatest comebacks I have ever seen. Jimmy played his brains out. Davis, who beat White, said: "The Harry Hoopur of snooker," I wrote with Jimmy-esque recklessness, for I too was young then, but Jimmy still lost 18-16.

He hammered Stephen Hendry, the world No.1, and then waltzed past Darren Morgan. On the way he has made breaks of 138 and 143, the highest of the tournament so far and likely to remain so. The Times snooker correspondent, Phil Yates, justifiably called him "a realistic candidate" for the championship.

Let us turn to the Tottenham Hoopur of football. Christian Gross, the head coach, whose record of talking sense this season is not exactly 100 per cent — at least, not in the right direction — summed up the fine performance of one of his best players, David Ginola, last Saturday: "He had a good performance, but he can still do it better. Look, he has the ability to face the most hostile fast bowling in the world. In White's own sport, Steve Davis did it only last year, refining his ancient certainties to win snooker's own Masters. Last Hurrhah happen in sport and they give us more delight than most things. But can Jimmy bring about his own Last Hurrhah? The problem with Jimmy is that he never really had a First Hurrhah. He has never won the world championship, never won the only competition that really counts. He has been runner-up a ridiculous six times. More absurdly still, he was runner-up five years in a row, four times to Hendry. Is this a tale of Hendry's excellence or White's lovable fallibility?"

Hodde issues writ against Uri Geller

GLENN HODDE, the England football coach, is to sue Uri Geller for libel and malicious falsehood, his solicitors announced yesterday. In a Sunday newspaper last week-end, Geller, a psychic, said that Hodde had visited him at his Berkshire mansion a couple of years ago and made various claims about what had taken place during the alleged meeting.

when he has been entrusted with preparing England for the World Cup finals. Hodde, who revealed last week that Eileen Drewery, a faith healer, has helped him and his squad, had earlier described Geller's claims as "an extraordinary combination of lies, inaccuracies, exaggerations and misleading innuendoes." Geller said last night that he would "vigorously" defend himself. "I am surprised and saddened by Glenn Hodde issuing a writ," he said. "I stand by the article... and for the record, as I have stated and now repeat, prior to his appointment as England coach, Glenn Hodde did visit my house with Eileen Drewery and Paul Elliott."

Advertisement for 'WORLD CUP TICKETS'. Features a large graphic of a World Cup trophy and text promoting tickets for the next Monday's matches. Includes contact information for the Football Association.

TENNIS: MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PRIZE-MONEY TO INCREASE PROPORTIONALLY

Wimbledon fund passes £7m

By Julian Muscat, Tennis Correspondent

PLAYERS competing at Wimbledon this year will share prize-money in excess of £7.2 million...

heavyweight fighter is always paid more than the lightweight. My view is that people prefer to watch the men's singles, and that is shown by our survey.



Martina Hingis, who followed Rusedski, was the only woman among the top seven...

thought. While 89 per cent believed that the catering was comparable with, or better than, other sporting events...

of a washout. Refunds will be halved if there is play after 6pm. Against that, Wimbledon's policy of prioritising disappointed spectators in the following year's allocation is to be scrapped...

Wimbledon, of course, must remunerate players competitively, although the 4.7 per cent year-on-year rise in prize-money runs marginally ahead of increases in ticket prices...

The survey, albeit far from comprehensive, throws up some interesting observations. Unsurprisingly, Tim Henman emerged as the most exciting player...

As interesting as the data made available were the details not published. Those who felt no improvements to facilities were needed amounting to 57 per cent...



Capriati demonstrates her much-improved backhand in her comfortable win over Florencia Labat, of Argentina, in Hamburg yesterday

IT SEEMS a little odd to be making a comeback at the tender age of 22, but for Jennifer Capriati it is becoming a way of life...

Capriati flourishing in new comeback attempt

an impressive 6-2, 6-4 victory over Florencia Labat, of Argentina...

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN HAMBURG

all her shots. By the time she had fired up her forehand she was ready for battle. Suddenly, in the fourth game, she let rip...

her opponent for nothing. But by then it was too late and, making one final push for the finishing line, Capriati was home in 67 minutes...

SPRING OFFERS Inclusive City Breaks, for travel up to 30 June. PARIS, AMSTERDAM, FLORENCE, BARCELONA, MADRID, DUBLIN. Includes hotel, flights, and transfers.

Agassi maintains record

ANDRE AGASSI maintained his perfect record against Todd Woodbridge with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 victory...

former Olympic champion. However, Haas was unable to complete the victory as Rosset hung on to an early break in the third set...

Belgian who beat Brett Steven. of New Zealand, 7-5, 6-1. Galo Blanco, on his Munich debut, beat Sergi Bruguera...

WORD-WATCHING. Answers from page 38. POONAC: a) The oil-cake or mass left after the oil has been expressed from coconut pulp... ZINGARO: b) A gypsy, so called in Italy. The name is thought to have come from Sinte or sind (India) and azilo (black)...

TELEVISION CHOICE

Putting truth behind bars

Counterblast: Deadly Silence BBC2, 7.30pm. A personal view by Sandra Downes is a heartbreaking indictment of the way the police and coroners courts appear to close ranks when a death occurs in custody...



O. J. Simpson and Ruby Wax (BBC1, 10pm)

Touching Evil ITV, 9pm. Remember the so-called OSC Unit? And the intrepid DI Dave Creagan with his sidekick DI Susan Taylor and DC Mark Rivers? They are the British Original and Serial Crime Unit, played by Robson Green, Nicola Walker and Shaun Dingwall...

our lot with them? Yet, when he was shot down himself in 1918, he was buried with full military honours not by the Germans but by the Allies...

Ruby Wax Meets O.J. Simpson BBC1, 10pm. The indefatigable Wax has, one notes, been careful about posing in smiling mode with the notorious O.J. Yes, the jury unanimously found the football and movie star innocent of the murder of his wife and her friend Ron Goldman...

Aviators: The Red Baron BBC2, 9.30pm. Wonderful Boys-Own series which, over three programmes, explores the Knights of the Air from World War One to the test pilots of the jet age...

RADIO CHOICE

Thinking Aloud: The Larger Map Radio 4, 4.30pm. Laurie Taylor is conscious that studio-bound series tend to mean a somewhat narrow approach. Therefore, starting today and continuing on the last Wednesday of the next 12 months, Taylor will be pursuing his belief that the heart of Britain is not a matter of geography...

Verona: A Conspiracy of Parrots Radio 4, 2.15pm. Stephanie Cole is back on television in the superb Keeping Mum but watch and then listen to this for a demonstration of her acting range...

RADIO 1, RADIO 2, RADIO 5 LIVE, TALK RADIO, VIRGIN RADIO, WORLD SERVICE, CLASSIC FM. Includes program schedules for various radio stations.

Survive. Large vertical advertisement on the right edge of the page.



CRICKET 40

Stewart ready to assume dual role for England

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 29 1998

TENNIS 42

Men still claiming lion's share of Wimbledon riches



Smith's career under threat after problem with out-of-competition drugs test

Fresh cloud cast over golden girl

By CRAIG LORD

TWO years ago, Michelle Smith was proclaimed Ireland's greatest sporting hero after winning three gold medals at the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

News that Smith, 28, faces possible suspension from swimming over a problem drugs test will be greeted with dismay by an adoring Irish public. Her Olympic achievements sparked night-and-day celebrations in Ireland that prompted a Government appeal for people to return to work.

Crowds lined the streets of Dublin to greet Smith home after she was met at the airport by the then President, Mary Robinson, despite the controversy surrounding Ireland's first Olympic swimming champion in Atlanta.

Smith's extraordinary progress, which saw her improve from outside the best 50 in the world to become not only the first Irish swimmer to make an Olympic final but a triple Olympic champion in just three years, prompted allegations of drug-taking.

Smith has always denied cheating and blamed the controversy on the American media. Her position won the sympathy of President Bill Clinton, who said that he too had "been a victim" of the American media.

The Irish Swimming Association has been informed by Fina, the sport's international ruling body, of the test in question, which is believed to have been produced by Smith, 28, early this year when out-of-competition testers called unannounced on the swimmer in Ireland.

Smith, from Rathcoole, near Dublin, may now request that the B sample of the drug test be analysed to confirm or annul the result of the A sample.

The nature of the test will determine whether Smith faces a suspension. Fina rules allow for a suspension of up to four years for the most serious abuses. Should Smith fall into that category, she would not be able to compete at the Olympic Games in Sydney 2000.

Last night, *The Times* was contacted by Peter Lennon, Smith's solicitor. While acknowledging that there was a problem with a drugs test, he said: "She has not failed a drugs test within the meaning of the rules."

Asked what he meant by that, Lennon, of Lennon Hearther and Co, replied: "Have you ever known an athlete to have been suspended for taking a drug that is not itemised or particularised? Have you ever known an athlete to have been suspended for interfering with a sample, as is alleged here?"

Lennon called the document from Fina to the IASA "somewhat unusual". He said that Smith would hold a press conference, probably today, to explain the situation she found herself in.

He added that he would call Fina in Switzerland this morning to inform them. "It was not her [Smith's] intention to hold a press conference. One of the primary issues... is that there should be absolute secrecy in these matters." That was no longer possible given that the matter was now "in the public domain".

Smith's achievements in Atlanta were all the more remarkable given that Ireland has no Olympic-sized (50-metre) swimming pool. She

now holds every Irish women's record, except in the breaststroke discipline.

Her extraordinary improvement in form, which came late in her career and catapulted her from relative anonymity to superstar status before the world's largest-ever television audience and had her compatriots dancing on table-tops in celebration, coincided with her relationship with Erik de Bruin, her coach and husband.

Smith met De Bruin, a former Holland international discus thrower at the 1992 Olympic Games. De Bruin served a four-year suspension, imposed by the International Amateur Athletic Federation, after failing a drugs test in 1993.

When she met De Bruin, Smith was ranked outside the best 50 swimmers in the world and would have failed to make even a British national final in the 400 metres freestyle, one of the races she went on to win in one of the fastest times ever recorded just four years later.

In Atlanta, Smith faced questions about De Bruin's past and her own vast improvement, made between 1994 and 1996. She denied that she had ever cheated, while De Bruin blamed the allegations of drug-taking and innuendo levelled at his wife on the American media and public, who were labelled by him as "sore losers".

In fact, Smith had already faced questions about her improved form as early as 1995, when she became the first Irish swimmer ever to become a European champion.

If the result of the out-of-competition test is accepted or confirmed by the B sample, Smith could also be stripped of the two gold and two silver medals that she won at the European championships in Seville, Spain, last summer. The Fina rules state that all competition results in the six months before a positive test is returned will be annulled.



Smith kisses her gold medal for the 100 metres freestyle, one of three events she won at the Olympic Games in Atlanta two years ago. She went on to win two gold and two silver medals at the European championships in Seville last year



Smith's gold-medal haul in Atlanta catapulted her to celebrity status and brought a meeting with President Clinton, alongside persistent questioning into the reasons behind her dramatically-improved performances



French have no power to keep out English hooligans

FROM JOHN GOODBODY IN PARIS

THE head of the £12 million French security operation for the World Cup yesterday admitted he had no powers to stop convicted English football hooligans from entering his country for the 32-nation tournament this summer.

René Georges Query explained: "Legally there is nothing we can do. There is freedom of movement across borders. However, if any troublemaker moves a finger they will be crawling back home."

France's policy contrasts with that at the 1990 World Cup, the last in Europe, when the Italian police turned back scores of English hooligans at border crossings and airports after they had been alerted by their British counterparts.

Query said his great fear was a possible second-round meeting between England and Scotland because he remembered the tension in central London after their match in Euro 96, when only expert policing prevented serious violence.

At that tournament the Home Office used its legal powers of refusing entry to "undesirable" foreigners to prevent known Dutch and German hooligans from arriving in Britain. The British Government has refused pleas from MPs to take away passports from convicted supporters.

However, Query, who will be deploying an average of 6,000 police for every matchday, said any foreigner convicted of causing trouble in France would be expelled and, if they returned, jailed.

Query, a former police superintendent who has special responsibility for serious crime and anti-hooliganism, said that England supporters were not his chief worry in the first phase of the tournament because there was no history of "vengeance" with the three opposing countries, who will be Colombia, Romania and Tunisia.

Instead he pinpointed Holland versus Belgium in the Stade de France in Paris on June 13, partly because both countries are only a three-hour train ride from Paris. He said: "The passions are going to be very high for that game. Some of the fans will probably be arriving without tickets."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

- No 1392**
- ACROSS**
- 1 Inconsiderate (9)
 - 6 Sware horse; loaf (3)
 - 8 Shop surface; measurer (7)
 - 9 Suite; conveyance (5)
 - 10 Piece of news; likewise (4)
 - 11 Pristine; unhackneyed (5)
 - 13 Ribbon of 17 dn (6)
 - 14 Fisherman with line (6)
 - 17 Overfussy (8)
 - 18 Pound; chewing tobacco (4)
 - 20 Thin; have mercy on (5)
 - 21 Foreign; unusual (7)
 - 22 Expert; a card (5)
 - 23 Rapidly grows (9)
- DOWN**
- 1 Ointment; soothing suavity (7)
 - 2 Very famous person (9,4)
 - 3 Behind; dead (4)
 - 4 Uproar (6)
 - 5 One suing (5)
 - 6 England/France; connection (7,6)
 - 7 Hackneyed (5)
 - 7 WWI poppy site; Anne of Cleves its mare (5)
 - 15 Richard - Oklahoma! composer (7)
 - 16 Humiliating disaster (6)
 - 17 Italian dough (5)
 - 19 Crustacean; an apple (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1391

ACROSS: 1 Colour-blind 8 Debug 9 Droplet 10 Tern 11 Discard 13 Day boy 14 Campus 17 Inclined 19 Ruff 22 Yredule 23 Chink 24 Sheet anchor

DOWN: 1 Cadet 2 Liberty 3 Urge 4 Bedsit 5 Ironclad 6 Delve 7 Stress 12 Solitude 13 Dainty 15 Prudish 16 Recent 18 Crass 20 Fakir 21 Scan

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